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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 8th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 16 June 1992, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Miss SETH (India)

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General debate (continued)

Statement by the Secretary-General

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Any corrections to the records of the meetings of this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mrs. KABA CAMARA (Observer for Côte d'Ivoire), referring to the Executive Director's recommendation concerning the country programme of Côte d'Ivoire (E/ICEF/1992/P/L.9, said that, despite the Government's efforts, the quality of life for women and children in her country had deteriorated. Although there was a basic health and education infrastructure, since 1980 the effects of external debt and falling commodity prices had obliged the Government to adopt structural adjustment measures, and the consequent drastic cuts in public spending had caused severe social hardship. The rural population, which accounted for 61 per cent of the total population, had been the hardest hit.

2. In Côte d'Ivoire, one family out of every 10, on average, was headed by a woman; as elsewhere in Africa, women lacked education and had low-paying jobs. The illiteracy rate for women was estimated at 86.3 per cent in rural areas and 71.9 per cent in urban areas; in Abidjan, it was 56.7 per cent. The infant mortality rate had fallen considerably since 1965, but remained quite high (110 per thousand in 1989). The maternal mortality rate was a disturbing 840 per 100,000 live births. The leading causes of death among infants included neonatal infections, malnutrition, diarrhoeal disease, malaria and respiratory infections. The authorities, having achieved an average vaccination coverage of 60 per cent, were no longer able to purchase the vaccine required to continue the immmunization policy.

3. The authorities were also concerned about the situation of children living in especially difficult circumstances. With the assistance of NGOs, training schemes had been established, but the effort required further support, particularly in view of the increase in street children and school dropouts due to the spread of family poverty and the lack of State financial resources. No progress was being made in the areas of education, water supplies, hygiene and social security and access to information on mother and child health care was limited.

4. One encouraging sign, however, was the growing political will, at government and local levels, to face the challenge in order to break out of the vicious circle of poverty. The country had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the Head of State had signed the Declaration and Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children; and the Government had concluded with UNICEF an agreement on a programme of cooperation to benefit women and children, setting forth guidelines and objectives for the year 2000.

5. The programme which was before the Board aimed first and foremost at removing regional disparities by benefiting the six most deprived regions and correcting disparities between girls and boys. The Bamako Initiative was, inter alia, part of the programme. The Government had expressed its readiness to promote education, health and target planning based on improved data

(Mrs. Kaba Camara,
Observer, Côte d'Ivoire)

collection and analysis, as well as improved institutional capacity and a closer partnership between State, population and donor community. The overall population policy was to control demographic growth; the task would require financial aid from the international community.

6. The forthcoming Donors' Conference on Assistance to African Children would be an opportunity to measure the degree of the commitments adopted at the World Summit for Children. Despite the constant reiteration that Africa had priority, there was nothing, in current financial and manpower allocations, to support that assertion. Children the world over needed equal attention, but it would be unjust to divert funds from South to North and to reduce contributions to Africa in order to attend to the needs of the new European democracies; the latter should be helped by means of additional resources.

7. Mr. CASSON (Australia) said that the first prerequisite for attaining the goals of the World Summit for Children and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was community participation. In many instances, unfortunately, the concept of actively involving recipients in programme design and implementation was not well applied in practice.

8. Australia welcomed the emphasis on community participation in Agenda 21 of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, as well as in recent UNICEF publications on children and the environment. The Bamako Initiative was an example of UNICEF's pro-active role in community involvement, and UNICEF's forthcoming report on programming for sustainable development presented an ideal opportunity for UNICEF to examine further strategies in that regard.

9. UNICEF could be proud of its achievement in alleviating the suffering of millions of children through the universal child immunization initiative. The goal of UCI having been reached in many countries, greater resources could henceforth be applied to other important child health problems. His delegation welcomed the papers on AIDS, women in development and acute respiratory infections (ARI); it particularly welcomed the ARI paper, noting the recognition of the links between environmental risk factors and ARI, and looked forward to details, in future reports, of UNICEF's efforts to make the environment less conducive to ARI. The AIDS pandemic was worsening, and the issue was gaining more attention in development forums. Australia noted the link between UNICEF's programmes and those of other agencies, and it endorsed UNICEF's proposal to intensify its AIDS prevention activities, but would like the secretariat to provide more details of the costs envisaged. It endorsed Denmark's call for further coordination at Headquarters and in the field.

10. His delegation welcomed the Executive Director's acknowledgement of the need to strengthen basic health infrastructures and services in order to promote access for the poorest, and agreed that capacity-building should underpin all programme initiatives; the relevant paper submitted by UNICEF usefully summarized the issues in that complex field. He hoped that UNICEF

(Mr. Casson, Australia)

would apply the concepts described therein to innovative strategies relating to ARI, women in development, HIV/AIDS and other UNICEF activities, and would welcome a report evaluating the extent and effectiveness of UNICEF's capacity-building initiatives.

11. One of the important issues before the current session was UNICEF's role in education. His delegation was particularly concerned that any effort by UNICEF to retain and possibly increase the share of expenditure on education should be accompanied by a careful delineation of goals to ensure complementarity with wider UNICEF objectives. A second issue was that of improving the transparency and accountability of UNICEF. The reports of the Budget Format Reference Group were a welcome start to making budget information more "user-friendly"; the proposal to reduce the existing 17 global funds to 4 was a satisfactory example. A third issue centred on evaluation, which was not only an important assessment tool but an aid to an organization's transparency and accountability - a matter of interest to the Australian Parliament when deliberating the allocation of funds. While noting the improved evaluation in recent years, his delegation felt that further steps should include improved capacity for field officers to monitor their programmes.

12. Mr. RISTIMÄKI (Finland) said that the approach adopted in the medium-term plan for 1992-1995 deserved support. His delegation endorsed the emphasis placed on the country programming process, the programme approach and national execution. The United Nations also had wide responsibility in the area of disaster relief, coordination of which activities had been strengthened by the recent establishment of the Department for Humanitarian Affairs. His delegation expected that UNICEF's emergency activities would in due course become an integral part of the new arrangement, and reiterated its view that UNICEF's involvement in emergency assistance should concentrate on tasks within its specific mandate.

13. His delegation was satisfied with the budget reform process initiated since the previous regular session, and hoped that reforms would continue. While Finland remained a major donor to UNICEF, with a contribution amounting to some US$ 30 million in 1992, it was unlikely that it would be able to maintain its contribution at the current level during the next few years. He therefore stressed the need for realism when making income projections.

14. It was important that United Nations operational activities for development should focus on common goals and strategies, with system-wide governance. One objective of the Nordic United Nations project was to increase the responsiveness of United Nations funds and programmes to governing body decisions. At the policy-making level, his delegation recognized the need to assign to a single intergovernmental body the task of debating broad development issues and providing coherent policy guidance; at the operational level, benefits could accrue from establishing separate small executive bodies for each programme and fund, to provide close links between the member States and the executive management. Such reforms would be

(Mr. Ristimäki, Finland)

considered at the forthcoming session of the Economic and Social Council. The ideas presented by the Executive Director were a valuable contribution in that regard.

15. Increased popular participation and people power were among the prerequisites for long-term sustainable development; UNICEF and other United Nations bodies should strive to foster the trend to democratic development which existed in many countries. His delegation strongly endorsed UNICEF's policy of giving priority assistance to the least developed countries, most of which were in Africa, and had endorsed UNICEF's support to southern African women and children; it supported UNICEF's increased preparedness to help improve the situation of the majority in South Africa, and of poor women and children in particular. In Africa and elsewhere, UNICEF should concentrate on country programmes, for which recipient Governments bore the main responsibility. In that regard, Finland had doubts about the planned Donors' Conference on Assistance to the African Child, since it failed to see the need to discuss broad policy issues so soon after the World Summit for Children, and thought it unlikely that such a conference would help to mobilize additional external resources.

16. The situation in Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States posed a challenge for UNICEF's advocacy role as well as its emergency and development activities. His delegation supported the Executive Director's recommendations contained in document E/ICEF/1992/L.14. Finland supported those countries bilaterally out of funds separate from development assistance; they should mobilize internal resources and make the best use of existing structures.

17. His delegation urged UNICEF to participate actively, in cooperation with UNFPA and other United Nations agencies, in preparations for the World Conference on Population and Development. UNICEF should further elaborate its population and family planning policies and make family planning an integral component of UNICEF-supported mother and child health and health education activities.

18. Mr. BOWEN (Barbados) said that one of the great challenges of the coming decade would be how to implement the goals of the Declaration adopted at the World Summit for Children. While the Latin American and Caribbean Governments were keen to implement the Summit goals, they were beset by an external debt of some US$ 428 billion in 1990, hyperinflation, chronic unemployment and abject poverty, and the prospect of achieving those goals therefore seemed bleak. His delegation therefore welcomed the recommendations, in document E/ICEF/1992/L.15, arising out of the mid-term evaluation of the Special Adjustment Facility for Latin America and the Caribbean (SAFLAC), and hoped that it would receive adequate financial support.

19. His delegation, while welcoming UNICEF's moves to intensify its advocacy for women, felt that more resources were needed for programmes to promote women's economic independence. In that context, it welcomed the Executive

(Mr. Bowen, Barbados)

Director's recommendation that the Board should approve the amount of US$ 5.1 million from general resources and US$ 5 million from supplementary funds for the multi-island programme of the eastern Caribbean for 1993-1997; that programme had been of great benefit and was strongly supported by the region's Governments.

20. UNICEF could not ignore the plight of children in Central and Eastern Europe and in the newly independent States; however, his delegation was pleased by the Executive Director's assurance that assistance to those States would not be at the expense of the children of Africa and other developing countries.

21. In keeping with the principle of "first call for children", Barbados had consistently allocated the highest portion of its national budget to the provision of education and primary health care for children. Its plan of action was near completion and would be integrated into the national development plan for the period 1993-1998. The achievement of the goals for children would become a major development objective. In November 1991, Barbados had hosted the first Caribbean Summit for Children which had brought together 34 children from 14 different Caribbean countries. The summit recommendations would be considered by the 13th meeting of heads of Government of the Caribbean Community in June 1992.

22. The 1990s would present a rigorous challenge to translate the goals of the World Conference on Education for All and the World Summit for Children into reality. His delegation urged UNICEF, WHO, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNDP and UNHCR to concert their efforts as that strategy offered the greatest hope for achieving the major goals for children by the year 2000.

23. Mr. GARDEZI (Pakistan) said that there was no cause which merited higher priority than the protection and development of children, on whom the survival, stability and progress of nations and, indeed, of human civilization, depended. The international community must evolve a holistic approach to development, particularly in the developing world. Basic human needs, and the cluster of goals for children, could not be separated; developmental experience had shown repeatedly that lack of progress in one goal inevitably hampered the fulfilment of other goals.

24. Pakistan had signed and ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child within a year of its adoption. It had finalized its national programme of action, which reflected the importance it attached to an even greater investment in future generations in its development priorities. The Prime Minister had set up a high-level task force to work out a plan of action for the well-being of children. The Government had also embarked on a three-year social action programme to expand immunization coverage, accelerate programmes for the control of diarrhoeal diseases and acute respiratory infections, and train community health workers; an allocation had been provided which was over and above the normal health budget for the year 1992-1993.

(Mr. Gardezi, Pakistan)

25. Many new initiatives had been undertaken. Remarkable results had been achieved through the accelerated health and diarrhoeal disease control programmes; more than 86 per cent of children under 2 years of age and 76 per cent of those under 1 year had been fully immunized, and ORS was now available to 73 per cent of families. Training had been provided for 35,000 traditional birth attendants.

26. In 1991, Pakistan had been one of the 12 developing countries selected to lead the baby-friendly hospital initiative. Meetings had been held in Pakistan with infant formula distributors, and they agreed to stop free and low-cost supplies to all the baby-friendly hospitals by February 1992, and to all health facilities by June 1992, and to monitor compliance with that agreement. The initiative was being gradually expanded to include hospitals in all provinces in Pakistan.

27. Pakistan was working on implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; compilation and annotation of Pakistani laws about children had been completed, which would facilitate the enactment of the necessary legislation about children. The Employment of Children Act of 1991 had been passed to prohibit the employment of children in certain occupations and regulate the conditions of work of children. Pakistan had participated in the South Asia consultations on the rights of the child and would be submitting its first implementation report to the committee on the rights of the child in December 1992.

28. His Government would not be able to achieve its ambitious goals without assistance and guidance from the world community; it would also be happy to share the lessons it had learned. In view of the high density of population and preponderance of women and children in South Asia, adequate funds must be allocated to the region and donor support must be provided to country programmes, the success of which would help bilateral and regional efforts.

29. His delegation supported the report of the Executive Director and was pleased that the largest sectors in the UNICEF programme remained the same.

30. Mrs. LUGEMBE (United Republic of Tanzania) said that Tanzania's new country programme for 1992 to 1996 had been designed with a view to implementing a community-based development strategy, focusing on building and strengthening organizational and management capabilities at the community and other levels. That strategy was likely to produce tangible results and sustainable development because the necessary organizational and operational infrastructure existed. However, persisting economic hardships, in particular the debt burden and the impact of structural adjustment programmes, had resulted in poor delivery of social services; there were acute shortages in schools and in the health sector and the associated infrastructure was not being maintained. Cultural attitudes that were heavily biased against women significantly compounded the problem; women, particularly in rural areas, continued to shoulder the bulk of the workload and to have very little access to credit and production facilities.

(Mrs. Lugembe, United Republic of Tanzania)

31. Her delegation welcomed the 10 propositions outlined in the State of the World's Children 1992. Her delegation joined others in urging UNICEF to maintain the emphasis on field orientation so as to ensure effective programme implementation. UNICEF's efforts in advocacy were commendable, particularly in raising awareness regarding the negative social impact of structural adjustment programmes; UNICEF, in cooperation with other agencies, should vigorously pursue other modalities for alleviating the problems of children, keeping in focus the continued need to reach the most disadvantaged groups.

32. Tanzania's National Coordination Committee had produced two drafts of the National Programme of Action, one for the mainland and one for Zanzibar, which would eventually be merged. A number of problems had been encountered. Since the strategy was community-based, a realistic national programme of action should involve the communities in its preparation, implementation and monitoring; therefore, the existing drafts were only a framework. However, in-depth studies were still needed in order to determine levels of financing realistically. A series of seminars and workshops would be held at the national, regional and district levels in order to obtain field experience and inputs from communities.

33. Her delegation was concerned that the resources allocated to the African continent, particularly from supplementary funding, were declining, and urged UNICEF to mobilize more funds from general resources, since that was the most reliable source of funding. UNICEF was providing commendable assistance in preparations for the Donors' Conference on Assistance to African Children, which should provide an opportunity for the international donor community to engage in dialogue with African countries and mobilize the additional resources that were required.

34. Her delegation regarded the Bamako Initiative as the most viable way of providing sustainable primary health care and urged UNICEF to continue its efforts and advocacy for the programme.

35. It was gratifying that UNICEF, unlike many agencies, worked closely with member Governments in articulating social policy issues, identifying problems and implementing programmes to redress those problems.

36. Mr. OSATANANDA (Thailand) said that UNICEF should continue its decentralized and flexible management structure to allow more effective delivery of services at the grass-roots level thereby ensuring optimum use of limited resources in serving the children of the world.

37. Thailand had achieved considerable progress in making breast-feeding education and practice an integral part of hospitals, and the Ten Steps had become policy for all hospitals. A national programme to promote breast-feeding had been launched, and legislation had been issued to extend maternity leave so as to enable mothers to breast-feed. Work was continuing on strengthening maternal education and designing a national education

(Mr. Osatananda, Thailand)

programme, with the participation of a number of non-governmental organizations.

38. On the subject of advocacy and social mobilization, his delegation shared the view that programme delivery and policy advocacy were complementary, and urged UNICEF to continue its efforts to influence policy makers and encourage action taken by families, communities, government and non-governmental organizations.

39. His delegation hoped that UNICEF would continue its work of integrating the issues and principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child into the country programmes of member States. Thailand had already acceded to the Convention. A national committee had been appointed to draft a national programme of action which would be used as national guidelines on child development.

40. It was gratifying that UNICEF was becoming more responsive to the many strategic and practical issues concerning women, since in many countries, the low status of women remained a major obstacle to their survival and advancement. His Government was pursuing policies for the betterment of women. A first National Assembly on Women and Development had been held in March 1992 and had produced a National Declaration on Women and Development and a long-term perspective plan on women. His delegation supported UNICEF's strategy of concentrating its assistance to developing countries on promoting the status of women through advocacy, policy-oriented research and technical cooperation, in collaboration with other development partners and other bilateral donors including NGOs.

41. Since the World Conference on Education for All, his Government had committed itself to strengthening and extending basic education through formal and non-formal systems, involving both public and private sectors, and had taken steps to ensure that children from marginalized families were given an equal opportunity to enrol for classes. Efforts were being made to encourage children to stay in school and to continue to the secondary school level. Attention was also being given to early childhood education. Kindergartens were increasingly available in rural areas; the curriculum was being made more responsive to the needs of different regions of the country; basic skills training was being provided to rural youth; and awareness of environmental problems was being encouraged.

42. Mr. ARRIA (Observer for Venezuela) said that his country had organized a national conference on the rights of the child to raise awareness of children's rights and to discuss targets, strategies and resources to achieve the goals for children for the year 2000. With UNICEF cooperation, programmes to reduce maternal and child deaths, malnutrition and low birth weight had been strengthened.

43. Many countries in Latin America were pursuing rigorous structural adjustment policies, without regard to social conditions. More and more

(Mr. Arria, Observer, Venezuela)

families were living in absolute poverty, and even the middle class had seen its standard of living decline. UNICEF could make an important contribution by reopening the discussion of "adjustment with a human face" and by advocating global economic policies integrating the social dimension.

44. Social management was strategic to social policy implementation, but there was a shortage of trained personnel. UNICEF should cooperate more closely with pilot management training programmes begun by UNDP and other regional organizations in order to ensure adequate human resources for the success of its programmes.

45. The plight of women and children living in poverty had gone almost unnoticed at the recently concluded Earth Summit. Everyone had spoken of preserving the planet for their children and their children's children, but many of the world's children would not survive to inherit that legacy, because children's issues were not given due priority by the international community.

46. His delegation supported the Executive Director's proposals for the establishment of a new world order for children. "First call for children" should be its guiding principles. The population issue, therefore, must be carefully examined, since it was closely associated with education and poverty. Children were the main concern of his Government's policies. Half the state budget was allocated to health and education programmes and other social expenditures with children as their main target. Such an approach was only natural, since children worldwide were absorbing the impact of society's failures.

47. Mr. ALI (Observer for Iraq) said that his country had always endeavoured by careful planning to ensure a better and happier life for Iraqi children. Inter alia, free medical care was given to mothers before and after childbirth, immunization was free for children, and crèches and kindergartens were made available for them. Under the Iraqi Constitution, primary education was compulsory for all children, and education at all levels was free. The intention was that children should grow up capable of creating a better society, with a view to a better future for the country and its civilization. All kinds of medical care were provided free of charge to all citizens. For the wellbeing of mother, child and family, every mother was given one year's compulsory paid leave following confinement.

48. For many years UNICEF had played a major role in supporting Iraq's efforts to improve the situation of children in Iraq, sometimes by advisory services and sometimes by material and moral assistance. However, all those efforts had largely collapsed during and after the Gulf War. He did not wish to inject political issues into the general debate, but it was essential to mention some of the facts that had caused the child health situation in Iraq to deteriorate tragically. The total destruction of electricity grids in Iraq had caused the spoilage of all vaccines in the country, while the destruction of water-treatment stations had destroyed the whole system, causing total water pollution. That had affected child health and led to a widespread

(Mr. Ali, Observer, Iraq)

outbreak of diarrhoea, typhoid and cholera among children. Even the children's milk plant, the only one in Iraq, had been totally destroyed, on the pretext that it served the Iraqi war effort.

49. His delegation had no doubt that no one desired the death of the children of Iraq. However, regrettably, what was happening now in Iraq, through the insistence of certain States on strengthening the stranglehold on the children of Iraq, was the premeditated murder of those very children. The statistics and studies prepared by UNICEF through its teams that had recently visited Iraq corroborated those facts. The latest statistics showed that, between August 1990 and March 1992, 39,114 Iraqi children under the age of 5 had died, while 119,305 citizens in the over-5 age group had died. The statistics prepared by a medical group that had visited Iraq before the above-mentioned period showed that more than 900,000 Iraqi children were suffering from severe malnutrition. A United States medical team which had visited Iraq in October 1991 had stated in its report that child mortality in Iraq had increased fourfold over the figure for the period prior to the imposition of sanctions.

50. As the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees had stated on the previous day, sanctions were "a double-edged sword". In the case of Iraq, it was children and women who were hurt most.

51. His delegation felt obliged to commend the material and moral assistance currently provided by UNICEF through its office in Iraq or through visits made by teams from time to time, in particular the visit of the Deputy Executive-Director. However, in spite of the volume of assistance provided by UNICEF and other humanitarian organizations, it was insufficient to meet fully the needs of children in Iraq and constituted only 5 to 10 per cent of the children's requirements that had been met by the Iraqi Government before the imposition of economic sanctions on Iraq. His delegation hoped that a separate report on the situation of children in Iraq would be prepared during the current session.

52. Mrs. BENNANI (Observer for Morocco) said that the commitments undertaken by the international community under the International Convention on the Rights of the Child had already been reflected in greater cooperation between the various agencies and organizations of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations. The role of the latter had been decisive, both in ensuring the adoption of the Convention and in preparing the programmes resulting from the World Summit. Her delegation was happy to support the 10 propositions contained in the State of the World's Children 1992, which provided guidelines for the implementation of the Convention and the decisions taken at the Summit. In particular, it welcomed the new recognition that alleviating the absolute poverty of one quarter of mankind should have the same priority in the new world order as peace-keeping and environmental protection.

(Mrs. Bennani, Observer, Morocco)

53. The demographic explosion of the last three decades and the major upheavals that had taken place in the world had undoubtedly helped to bring about an unjust economic situation in which children were the prime victims. Many children in the third world, and especially in Africa, lived in unstable societies characterized by the disintegration of loosely structured families afflicted by chronic poverty. New forms of child suffering and abuse were emerging, and were likely to increase as certain countries lapsed into anarchy, in addition to the ravages caused by AIDS and by the famine resulting from drought and armed conflict. It was to be hoped that additional resources would be made available to UNICEF in order to enable it to shoulder its heavy burden in the years to come.

54. Since 1957, the Agreement between Morocco and UNICEF had paved the way for extremely fruitful cooperation in a number of areas such as maternal and children's health, nutrition, education, water supply and hygiene. Health services for mothers and children had been improved, and the birth rate had declined from 6.9 in 1980 to 4.5 in 1991 - as had the infant mortality rate, from 122 per 1,000 in 1975 to 73 per 1,000 in 1991. However, despite those significant achievements, infant, child and maternal mortality remained high.

55. Unprecedented progress had been made over the previous five years in respect of vaccination. With UNICEF's cooperation, Morocco's national vaccination programme had achieved the target of 80 per cent coverage of all children. That spectacular success had had a positive impact on the countries of the Maghreb Arab Union.

56. The 1992-1996 cooperation cycle between her Government and UNICEF had been carefully prepared in accordance with national objectives and with those contained in the Declaration of the World Summit for Children. The UNICEF office in Morocco had played a catalytic role in facilitating the preparation of an innovative and wide-ranging programme. In addition, information campaigns had been launched throughout Morocco to explain the provisions of the Declaration to all the national agencies involved in the welfare of children.

57. The Government had also adopted a major national plan of action, which contained, inter alia, a priority programme for children in especially difficult circumstances in the urban fringes, in addition to a programme for the education of young girls. With the latter priority in mind, non-governmental organizations of the Maghreb Arab Union had been organizing symposia and seminars on the health and education of girls.

58. Her Government was also engaged in preparing an economic and social development plan for the period 1993-1997, the major outlines of which would be in line with the aims and objectives of the World Summit.

59. In connection with external debt, her country had agreed that part of that debt should be swapped for drinking-water projects in rural areas.

(Mrs. Bennani, Observer, Morocco)

Furthermore, loans currently under negotiation with the World Bank would benefit education, health, public housing, employment and the environment.

60. Her delegation noted with consternation that, as a result of the Gulf war, a large number of children in that region were living in particularly difficult conditions, as were many children in Lebanon, Sudan and the occupied Palestinian territories.

61. UNICEF teams had efficiently carried out a considerable number of emergency operations. Although those operations had caused expenditure to rise from $49 million in 1990 to $111 million in 1991, it was noteworthy that UNICEF had been able to fulfil its increased obligations without detriment to its existing programmes.

62. Mr. YAHYA (Indonesia) said that the current world situation favoured the advancement of the goals of child survival, protection and development and the fulfilment of commitments entered into at the World Summit for Children.

63. The vast changes in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States undoubtedly required an appropriate response. The developing countries, however, wished to ensure that that response did not entail a diversion of resources away from them, and from Africa in particular. National conflicts and regional tensions continued to exact a high toll in human life and to divert financial and material resources from productive activities. In addition, economic hardship and natural disasters had led to a substantial increase in expenditure for emergencies. His delegation would welcome more information on the analysis of the workload relating to implementation of supplementary-funded programmes in order to justify the Executive Director's recommendation.

64. His delegation supported the recommendation by the Executive Director to reorganize and consolidate all UNICEF global funds, currently numbering 17, into four principal funds, as outlined in document E/ICEF/1992/L.10. Follow-up to the World Summit for Children and progress towards the goals for children and women by the year 2000 was encouraging as well. Every country should be encouraged to implement child survival and development programmes on the basis of self-reliance. Great progress had been made in the world-wide acceptance and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, but the sense of urgency must be maintained so that commitments might be translated into action.

65. With regard to the medium-term plan (E/ICEF/1992/3), it appeared that a major challenge facing UNICEF was how to help countries secure access to knowledge, technology and health care, which implied the strengthening, revitalization or establishment of primary health care structures and systems. Community participation was essential if lasting results were to be achieved. His delegation welcomed the attention given to such critical issues as family planning and birth spacing.

(Mr. Yahya, Indonesia)

66. Indonesia's current five-year plan addressed a number of goals set forth at the World Summit: an increase in national immunization coverage of children under one year from 80 per cent to 90 per cent by 1996; reduction by half of severe and moderate malnutrition among children under five; promotion of breast-feeding through "baby-friendly" hospitals; halving of the maternal mortality; and universal access to basic education, with special attention to primary education and reduction of current disparities between boys and girls. His Government supported the idea of convening a world summit for social development.

67. Mr. SALMERON (Nicaragua) said that his Government fully supported UNICEF targets for the 1990s, in particular, a reduction in child mortality by one-third and in child malnutrition by half, and a reduction in deaths from measles by 95 per cent and from diarrhoea by 50 per cent. Building on the achievements of the last decade, those targets would save the lives of 3 million children each year. Furthermore, UNICEF efforts to improve inter-agency coordination had been highly effective, and could serve as a model for other agencies.

68. Development with a human face required major efforts to alleviate poverty and to promote awareness of the negative impact of structural adjustment programmes. Therefore, his Government supported increasing the resources of the Special Adjustment Facility for Latin America and the Caribbean. UNICEF had long been working to find a solution to the external debt problem, and he hoped that the "debt relief for children" proposals would soon become reality. The global disarmament process must be intensified as well, so that those resources could be channelled into programmes for children and for the most vulnerable groups of society.

6 . The Government of Nicaragua was committed to a social policy designed to protect the most vulnerable sectors of the population, alleviate poverty and improve the quality of life and the quality and efficiency of basic services - education, rural employment, primary health care, sanitation and nutrition - within a context of total respect for human rights. Economic support from the international community was required, however, to supplement its own efforts.

70. Strengthening of the national health system was vital to the efforts to address the problems of children. Like most Latin American countries, Nicaragua had high rates of maternal and child mortality and infectious disease and a growing rate of chronic degenerative diseases, compounded by disabilities caused by the war and the need to provide services and assistance to returnees and demobilized soldiers. To address those problems, the national health system should be strengthened through a system of local primary health care centres, a strategy which would develop and consolidate capabilities at the community level and ensure that the limited resources available were utilized in the most efficient and equitable manner. The Government had established a National Commission for the Protection of Children, which had recently submitted a five-year plan of action for Nicaraguan children to UNICEF. Its main objective was to reverse the factors

(Mr. Salmeron, Nicaragua)

hindering child development, by strengthening education, health and communications policy, and by promoting greater community participation in social programmes for children, youth and women.

71. His delegation supported UNICEF efforts to promote the role of women in development and its continued support to the formulation of national policies giving greater attention to children and women, as well as family planning and population policy. It welcomed the joint report of the Executive Directors of UNICEF and UNFPA (E/ICEF/1992/L.13). The recommendations contained in document E/ICEF/1992/AB/L.8, presented a realistic view of the needs of emergency programmes and funding for field activities. While UNICEF assistance to Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of independent States was important, that support should not mean any lessening of the priorities assigned to developing countries.

72. Mr. MONTAÑO (Observer for Mexico) said that the 1990s could be a decade of renewed hope for a better life for the world's children in an atmosphere of freedom and social justice. He noted that the economic problems of the developing countries had resulted in lowered standards of living for the population, particularly the most vulnerable groups. Structural adjustment policies and military expenditure in some developing countries had led to a decline in access to health services and education, with a direct effect on vulnerable groups. Despite those socio-economic obstacles, UNICEF had achieved great progress, particularly in the health field.

73. The Government of Mexico had recently undertaken an unprecedented programme of action to assist children, women and youth. Its main objective was to guarantee improved child survival, protection and development, involving health, education, basic sanitation and assistance to children in especially difficult circumstances. Progress towards those goals would be monitored every six months. In addition, his Government had put its commitments into action by repaying a significant portion of the principal of its external debt and channelling what it had thus saved in interest payments into social programmes to fight absolute poverty, which would benefit the most disadvantaged children.

74. The worsening situation in Africa was of great concern. Natural disasters, armed conflict and severe economic recession, compounded by external debt, had led to the current situation. His Government fully supported the priority given to Africa.

75. The progress achieved for children would be of no real benefit unless there was corresponding progress in integrated development. The political commitment of the industrialized countries to reverse global economic decline and to promote recovery in developing countries was essential in order to guarantee peace in the coming century.

STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

76. The SECRETARY-GENERAL said that, more than any other single statistic, the fact that 40,000 children died every day in the world as a whole testified to the scale of the international community's responsibilities and, perhaps, to the inadequacy of prevailing economic principles. The responsibility for remedying that situation lay first and foremost with UNICEF.

77. He himself had welcomed his appointment to the post of Secretary-General not least because it offered him the opportunity to make a contribution, however small, to the cause of children, and particularly children in the big cities of the third world. As the Mayor of Montreal had said at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, children were in the forefront of the endangered species. More than 200 million children were living, and sometimes dying, in the streets. However, it was not only in the countries of the South that children died a lingering or violent death: in Europe children who had been abused were dying of their wounds, and in totalitarian regimes they were tortured for refusing to spy on their parents. Perhaps the children who died an early death from sickness, hunger or violence saw the twentieth century world in a more realistic light than did the adults who discussed their plight.

78. He had long been convinced that there could be no improvement in the situation without better living conditions, training and opportunities for children all over the world. His own contribution to that endeavour would be to achieve greater coordination of action throughout the United Nations system. At the Rio Summit, the focus had been on environment and development, the two challenges which must henceforth be addressed together, in other words the focus had been on the long term, yet as had been pointed out there were only about 400 weeks remaining until the end of the twentieth century. He himself had told the Conference that its work was intended for the benefit of future generations, and to that he would now add that UNICEF's efforts on behalf of children must be in tune with the spirit of Rio, and directed towards the goal of sustainable and global development.

79. The coordinated mobilization of the international community's resources to prevent crises was one of the priorities he had assigned himself as Secretary-General, but crises affected not only international security in the traditional sense, but also security within the wider framework of economic balance and protection of the planet. Security in that global context was the essential factor in crisis-prevention, and its achievement presupposed greater coordination between the organizations of the United Nations system. He therefore welcomed the observations in that regard made by the Executive Director in his opening statement at the current session.

80. The Executive Board was to be commended for the excellent guidance it had provided to UNICEF over the years, particularly by steering the Fund through the difficult period of the cold war when ideological conflicts had hampered international cooperation on various fronts. Similarly, during times of accute economic crisis - most notably the 1980s - UNICEF had found ways to

(The Secretary-General)

help Governments stretch limited resources by relying on low-cost, high-impact interventions and mobilizing communities to improve conditions for children. The approach promoted from the mid-1980s, which was aimed at sparing children the worst effects of austerity measures, had helped to build the broad international consensus that now prevailed regarding the need for human-centred development, poverty-alleviation and the importance of "safety nets" in times of crisis and transition.

81. The Executive Board had also kept UNICEF at the forefront of the United Nations response to emergencies. The new instabilities and conflicts in the period following the cold war would require even closer cooperation and greater effectiveness on the part of the United Nations system, under the leadership of the new Emergency Relief Coordinator and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Eliasson.

82. It was a significant achievement that 117 States had already ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which for the first time recognized children's essential needs as rights: its universal ratification and application must be seen as key tasks of the era of democratization. A further significant step had been the World Summit for Children, at which the Governments of Member States had committed themselves to the compelling ethical principle that children's essential needs should have a "first call" on society's resources, and to an agenda whose implementation would significantly improve the lives of all children by the year 2000. It was to be welcomed that the Plan of Action adopted by the World Summit was now being translated into national programmes of action in over 120 countries. The United Nations system - with UNICEF as its lead agency for children - was assisting developing countries in the critical follow-up process, and would help to monitor progress towards meeting the agreed goals. He looked forward to issuing a comprehensive progress report in that regard later in the year, and was confident that it would reflect an accelerated pace of implementation in all countries and the necessary reordering of priorities. He trusted that the national programmes of action would also address the critical issue of additional financial resources, without which the promises that the world had made to its children could not be met.

83. As Secretary-General, it was his goal to employ the machinery of the United Nations system to prevent crises, not only in respect of peace and international security, but also in the economic, social and environmental spheres. He was convinced that the international community could do far more to prevent armed conflicts, hunger and disease and environmental degradation. That would require increased cooperation, vision and leadership, in addition to greater efficiency on the part of the United Nations system. He had been encouraged at the recent session of the Administrative Committee on Coordination by the willingness of all members to develop new approaches for collaboration. In his capacity as Chairman of that body, he would ensure that coordination received high priority and that the full potential of the United Nations system was harnessed to meet the critical challenges of the future.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.

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EXECUTIVE BOARD

1992 regular session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 9th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 16 June 1992, at 6.15 p.m.

Chairman: Miss SETH (India)

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General debate (conclusion)

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent to Ms. M. A. Cuna, Office of the Secretary of the Executive Board, room H-12K, UNICEF House, 3 United Nations Plaza, New York.

Any corrections to the records of the meetings of this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

The meeting was called to order at 6.20 p.m.

GENERAL DEBATE (conclusion)

1. Mrs. CANEDO (Observer for Bolivia) said that the entire international community bore the responsibility of ensuring that the world's children had the right to a decent and a productive life. Special attention should be focused on the situation of the developing countries, which were endeavouring, through huge sacrifices, to overcome the legacy of colonialism and dependency. To that end, they were incorporating into national development plans integrated strategies for social and economic development, through which, in 10 years' time, maternal and child mortality in Latin America would be reduced.

2. The promotion of the rights of the child was a crucial element of social policy in Bolivia. The Government had adopted a number of measures to improve the status of mothers and children, such as the National Plan for Maternal and Child Survival and Development; the Ten-Year Plan for Children, which included activities in such areas as health, education, water supply and sanitation, and the care of children in especially difficult circumstances; the prevention and care policies and programmes of the National Panel on Solidarity and Social Development, prepared within the framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; and the Bolivian Social Strategy, which outlined the general features of a social policy closely linked to economic policy.

3. In order to bring the existing legislation into line with the provisions of the Convention, the Children's Code had been drafted and had been adopted on first reading by the Senate. The Code promoted the integral development of children; established a standard of universality; formulated social policies on prevention and care; enumerated the rights of the child and set up legislative, judicial, administrative and other mechanisms to regulate the observance of those rights; outlined measures to protect children in especially difficult circumstances, and raised the age of criminal responsibility to 18 years.

4. Furthermore, the National Panel on Solidarity and Social Development had adopted a number of measures designed to clarify and to resolve such issues as the foreign adoption of Bolivian children, the departure of children from the country and the impunity of those who committed crimes against children.

5. All of those measures had been made possible by the continuous support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), since the Government, the National Panel on Solidarity and Social Development and the UNICEF field office in Bolivia carried out joint activities in support of the principle of a "first call for children". UNICEF support was essential if children were to be provided with greater assistance and protection, and with education, training and opportunities for integration into society, through diagnostic and therapeutic centres for children who engaged in antisocial behaviour, temporary shelters for abandoned children and foster homes for children from

(Mrs. Canedo, Observer, Bolivia)

birth to six years of age. The mass media must be made aware of violence against and abuse of women, and the activities of the various agencies concerned with the problems of mothers, children and families must be coordinated.

6. With regard to the International Year for the World's Indigenous Peoples, the Government of Bolivia attached the greatest importance to the defence and the development of indigenous peoples and received assistance from UNICEF through the Intercultural Bilingual Education Programme, which benefited more than 5,000 indigenous children throughout the national territory. Furthermore, with the support of the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF, Bolivia had become one of the countries where, in February 1992, there had been at least two hospitals which promoted breast-feeding. It was to be hoped that the donor countries would increase the resources which they allocated to programmes and policies designed to ensure the survival, the development and the protection of children.

7. Mr. ACHARYA (Observer for Nepal) said that the radically transformed global political landscape provided a historic opportunity for the international community to devote its attention and resources to the welfare of the world's children. UNICEF and the Executive Board must find a way to respond effectively to the problems of children in the new and evolving world order. The 1990s had so far proved to be a remarkable decade for children. The adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the convening of the World Summit for Children, and the goals and strategies for children in the 1990s adopted by the UNICEF Executive Board represented the culmination of the Fund's efforts to improve the status of children by the year 2000.

8. Vast progress had already been made in implementing the goals envisaged in the Summit Plan of Action - for example, in such areas as universal child immunization, oral rehydration therapy and the treatment of acute respiratory infections - which had helped to reduce child mortality rates in many developing countries. UNICEF was now facing the challenge of broadening and sustaining the progress achieved, for which substantial resources would be required. The developing countries, in which the majority of the world's children lived, could not shoulder that responsibility on their own. Without substantial external support, the developing countries, especially the least developed among them, would not be able to achieve the goals set for the year 2000.

9. At the national level, the Government of Nepal was determined to improve the condition of children. The convening of the World Summit for Children had coincided with the restoration of democracy in Nepal, and the new Government had accorded the highest priority to ameliorating the plight of Nepalese children. Nepal had recently ratified its first United Nations conventions, namely, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Nepal had also signed the World Declaration on the Survival, Development and Protection of

(Mr. Acharya, Observer, Nepal)

Children and the Plan of Action adopted at the World Summit for Children. It had already prepared its national programme of action with a view to implementing the global goals for children and for development, goals which had been duly adapted to the Nepalese context. Likewise, the five-year plan for the period 1992-1996 gave the highest priority to the implementation of the strategies contained in the national programme of action and the achievement of its goals. Measures were currently being adopted for the enforcement of the laws prohibiting child labour, child exploitation and early childhood marriage. Moreover, numerous governmental and non-governmental organization had undertaken initiatives to ameliorate the plight of children and women throughout the country.

10. Nepal had meagre resources at its disposal and the constraints arising from poverty, illiteracy and ignorance had a debilitating effect on its capacity for action. Accordingly, his delegation appealed to the international community and to the multilateral institutions to continue to provide generous assistance to the developing countries. Likewise, he urged the industrialized countries to prepare their own national programmes of action and to review their level of development cooperation with the developing countries.

11. The seven member States of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) accorded the highest priority to the question of women and children. In South Asia, the region with the greatest number of children living in conditions of absolute hunger and poverty, the plight of children was desperate. One of the decisions taken by the Association in the field of child welfare was to incorporate the recommendations of the World Summit into a regional action plan. The decade 1990-2000 had been designated the Decade of the Girl Child; moreover, at the SAARC summit conference held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in December 1991, it had been decided to convene another SAARC conference on children. Recently, at the initiative of the UNICEF Regional Office for Asia, a consultative meeting of SAARC parliamentarians had been held in Kathmandu to prepare common strategies to reach the goals of the Summit by the year 2000.

12. His delegation supported the Executive Director's decision to give the highest priority to the countries of Africa, but believed that adequate relief should continue to be given to the least developed countries, both in Africa and elsewhere in the world. It was concerned about the plight of children in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and Central and Eastern Europe and in the former Soviet Union. The international community and UNICEF should support the children of those regions, without reducing or diverting resources that should go on a priority basis to the least developed countries. His delegation also supported the protection UNICEF had given to children in emergency situations resulting from natural disasters, wars and civil strife, and welcomed the close cooperation of UNICEF with the newly established Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations, as well as with WHO, WFP and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in responding to emergency situations.

(Mr. Acharya, Observer, Nepal)

13. His delegation supported the policies and priorities presented in the UNICEF medium-term plan (1992-1995) (E/ICEF/1992/3) and agreed with the criteria for general resources allocation. However, it wished to point out to the Executive Board that the increases proposed for education, water supply and sanitation might not materialize, given the modest increases in revenues forecast in the current plan. In view of the colossal task UNICEF was facing, the international community - and in particular the donor countries - should continue to contribute generously to UNICEF supplementary funds.

14. Lastly, there was no doubt that the environment in which children lived had a direct bearing on their general level of development. The lack of safe drinking water, poor or non-existent sanitation facilities, widespread poverty and the developing countries' population explosion had a negative impact on child survival, growth and development. He welcomed UNICEF's attempts to include an environmental component in its programmes. The Joint UNICEF/WHO Committee and its intersectoral approach to formulation of health, family planning, water supply and sanitation programmes would do much to ensure a safe and healthy environment for children's growth and development.

15. In conclusion, his delegation welcomed the recent establishment, in Kathmandu, of the UNICEF regional office for South Asia, which betokened a renewed commitment on the part of UNICEF to ensuring the welfare of the children of the entire region.

16. Mrs. DAMUSIS (Observer for Lithuania), speaking on behalf of the Baltic States, said that Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were experiencing great political, economic and social upheavals during their transition to a market economy and that the health of children, women and other vulnerable groups was at risk. During the decades of failed central planning, the welfare of those groups had been neglected and their plight was now worsened by the deterioration of the economy and by social unrest. The Governments of the Baltic States thanked UNICEF for the mission it had sent at the beginning of 1992 and for its very useful report on the pressing needs of children in those States, as well as for its prompt initial emergency assistance.

17. The Baltic States were sensitive to the critical needs of women and children in the developing world and firmly supported the priority given by UNICEF to the poorest and least developed countries, particularly those of the African continent. At the same time, it was only fair that UNICEF should give assistance on the same terms to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States that met the requirements for receiving UNICEF support.

18. In the case of Lithuania, a small amount of assistance from supplementary funds would guarantee that long-term progress would not be compromised by short-term requirements, and would contribute to the maintenance of a minimum level of health and nutrition at a time when the Governments of the Baltic States were facing grave difficulties. The ability of families to meet their

(Mrs. Damusis, Observer, Lithuania)

own needs had been diminished by rising unemployment and prices and falling incomes. With every passing day it became increasingly evident that the effects of the transition process had been grossly underestimated. Government agencies were not equipped to deal with the needs of the most vulnerable groups, namely women and children, when their need for assistance was most acute. The non-governmental organizations and private volunteer organizations that had existed in the first years of independence had been destroyed in the course of the last 50 years and were only just beginning to be rebuilt.

19. Central and Eastern Europe were suffering from a chronic shortage of essential vaccines and lacked basic medical and surgical supplies as well as the essential medications to treat respiratory, allergic and degenerative diseases and the most common adult health problems: diabetes, heart disease, asthma, hypertension and infections. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were therefore having serious difficulty in maintaining essential health services and, a fortiori, in becoming self-sufficient in that area through the local production of pharmaceuticals.

20. The Baltic States' decades-long isolation and the resultant lack of up-to-date information, support for research and access to the latest knowledge and methods was complicating the transformation of the existing system, which suffered from a lack of adequate equipment for basic maternal and child health care.

21. For those reasons, the Baltic States needed UNICEF assistance as part of a common United Nations approach involving programmes to help achieve sustainable development and to create efficient systems for the acquisition and distribution of medical equipment and networks of up-to-date medical information that would enable them to meet the commitments made at the World Summit for Children.

22. The Baltic States supported the draft resolution presented by Poland on Central and Eastern Europe calling for an extension of UNICEF services to countries of that region and to the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltics. Such an extension would represent only a small fraction of total expenditures world-wide and would prevent the collapse of their infrastructure and the resultant necessity for much greater investments in the future.

23. Mr. ETEFFA (Ethiopia) said that activities related to the well-being of children should be based on a global vision; some children in the industrialized countries experienced the same difficulties as children in the developing world, and the fate of children was inseparably linked to the well-being of society at large. Sustainable care for children could not be achieved without eliminating poverty in the developing world.

24. In many developing countries women were subordinate to men; they were less educated - in part because they were given in marriage at a very early age and thus, especially in Africa, took on a multitude of domestic and

(Mr. Eteffa, Ethiopia)

production responsibilities - and less well nourished, and that subordinate status affected children more directly than any other social or economic factor. Approximately 500,000 women died each year from causes related to child-bearing, the vast majority of them in developing countries. Studies indicated that 7 million perinatal deaths each year were associated with women's general ill-health and poor nutritional status prior to and during pregnancy. For the same reasons, 21 million infants were born each year with low birth weight and were thus far more likely to die of infectious diseases or to suffer developmental problems. Moreover, only 5 to 10 per cent of the children born in such conditions lived beyond their first year. Therefore, improving the status of women would have an impact on improving the quality of life of mothers and, consequently, of their children and husbands.

25. Ethiopia had taken various concrete steps towards formulating a national programme of action, which was in its final stage of implementation, and, in an effort to integrate women's issues into the planning process, a women's unit had been established in the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development and various sensitization workshops had been conducted at the national and regional levels. In addition, at a summit conference of heads of State held at Addis Ababa to address political, social and humanitarian issues of the Horn of Africa, cooperation agreements had been arrived at. A follow-up conference had been held two weeks earlier at Bahir Dar to deal with the problems of Somalia by bringing together elders from all parts of the country. Moreover, the new economic policy, the democratization process and decentralization, together with the absence of conflicts, were creating a stimulating environment by enhancing access to the remote corners of the country.

26. Since the welfare of children was inseparable from education, United Nations institutions and other organizations dealing with children should coordinate their programmes, in particular in order to encourage international forums at an early age and so do away with the ignorance that engendered hatred and conflict among peoples. In addition, agencies such as UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO and WHO should coordinate their efforts more and provide training for religious, political and community leaders so that children would have role models to follow in regard to their cross-cultural exposure.

27. Mr. VAN DUNEM (Angola) said that most third world countries had lately been facing difficulties such as natural disasters, drought, the continual lowering of the prices of their main export products, the high cost of manufactured products, and very high foreign debt, to say nothing of the wars that still affected some; as a result people's living conditions, especially those of children had deteriorated and poverty, famine, diseases, criminality, prostitution and infant mortality had increased.

28. The Government of Angola had made a tremendous effort to rehabilitate the health and educational structures, 50 per cent of which had been destroyed in the war that had devastated the country for the last 30 years. The Government

(Mr. Van Dunem, Angola)

had recently created a special organization, the Children's National Institute, to coordinate assistance to children. In spite of the difficult economic situation there had been some improvements in children's living conditions: the number of children in primary school had increased; the number of children vaccinated against the major childhood diseases was now higher than before independence; various maternal and child health programmes had been implemented, and the Government had provided the necessary support to orphans and abandoned children.

29. Africa was characterized by high infant mortality rates, and high illiteracy and poverty levels. International humanitarian assistance had been provided to meet emergency situations, but it did not guarantee the desirable sustainable development. The industrial countries should therefore provide their loans in a more acceptable way, such as that adopted by the United Kingdom, which was granting funds to strengthen the Angolan water and sanitation programme.

30. Once the newly signed cease-fire agreement - which was to guarantee economic rehabilitation and better management of public funds - was consolidated and democracy was successfully implemented the issues affecting Angolan children would be the following: the risk of economic collapse, characterized by inflation, low purchasing power, prostitution, juvenile delinquency and AIDS; lack of food and the consequent malnutrition among children, which exposed them to deadly diseases such as diarrhoeal disease and respiratory infections, malaria and measles; lack of motivation among many professionals involved in the delivery of priority programmes; the socio-economic burden of big families that had not been able to practise family planning; the inaccessibility and lack of security in many rural areas, which limited women's participation in traditional agricultural systems and in other productive tasks; and limited implementation of the Bamako Initiative, pending rehabilitation of the national health network. In order to tackle those problems it would be necessary to continue implementing the UNICEF programmes currently under way, and the international community would have to seek ways to mitigate the effects of structural adjustment policies.

31. Mr. KANE (Mauritania) said that the adoption, in 1989, of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the holding, in 1990, of the first World Summit for Children had been two landmarks in UNICEF efforts to get States to give priority to children's issues as a result of which it was now generally agreed that human development and the fight against poverty were two fundamental development issues for the 1990s. The development of a Plan of Action for implementing the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s had been a milestone; at the same time, despite the initiatives and reactions it had inspired, the hopes raised, in particular, by the disappearance of ideological confrontations and the end of the cold war, had yet to be realized.

(Mr. Kane, Mauritania)

32. In spite of the progress of science and technology and the notable success achieved through universal immunization campaigns and the use of oral rehydration therapy, infant and maternal mortality rates continued to rise in Africa. Despite the continued priority to Africa, given in decision 1991/13 of the Executive Board, the funds and staff devoted to that continent - amounting to one third of UNICEF general resources - were not commensurate with the magnitude of the problems.

33. The Bamako Initiative had outlined a suitable conceptual model and was being implemented in more than 18 African countries, but its implementation was being hampered by insufficient funding and by such natural phenomena as desertification. The crushing weight of debt was also hindering efforts by African countries to ensure their peoples' welfare. Accordingly, Mauritania supported the conclusions and recommendations of the group that had evaluated the said Initiative, which, in its report (E/ICEF/1992/L.20) had advised that continuous and increasing support must be given to the Bamako Initiative if its full promise was to be realized. His delegation hoped that the OAU Donors Conference on Assistance to African Children, to be held in Dakar in November 1992, would lead to renewed support from African countries in that vital area.

34. The problems of mothers and children had always been of concern to the Mauritanian authorities because of the values of Mauritanian society and the certainty that children's access to education and health constituted the best guarantee of a successful future for the country. Therefore, one of the first measures taken by the national authorities, elected in an electoral process that had led to the creation of new democratic institutions, had been to reduce the cost of common essential medications and to ensure popular participation in the management of public health programmes. That decision was in line with a new social policy that took citizens' health concerns into account and was part of a strategy of decentralization the master plan of which had been approved in 1991.

35. The new initiatives complemented a series of earlier measures to promote maternal and child health. Mauritania had been one of the first countries to adopt the expanded programme of immunization, and it had endeavoured to provide consistent primary health care, achieving over 60 per cent coverage in rural areas. Satisfactory progress was also being made in education, and the authorities were promoting and supporting education for women.

36. At the regional level, Mauritania was taking part in efforts to eradicate dracunculiasis (guinea-worm disease). In the context of the recommendations adopted by the international workshop to evaluate programmes in that field held recently in Nouakchott, Mauritania had adopted a national plan for guinea worm eradication by 1995.

(Mr. Kane, Mauritania)

37. In Mauritania, mothers and children were viewed as essential parts of the family unit, which determined the overall development of society. For that reason, Mauritania had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in May 1991 and was organizing each year the commemoration of the Day of the African Child. A national action plan for the survival, protection and development of the Mauritanian child was currently being drafted.

38. Because of the efforts of UNICEF and its dedicated staff, the problems of children were receiving special attention world-wide. Their living conditions, however, reflected all types of problems. In South Africa and in Palestine, children remained subject to oppression and occupation; in other parts of the world they were the innocent victims of bloody conflict; in some countries they were the first to experience the effects of structural adjustment policies. Furthermore, preventable diseases, exacerbated by intolerable poverty, continued to exact a high toll on children. It could only be hoped that with the new legal instruments, which had been signed by the vast majority of States, children would truly become a global priority.

39. Mr. SERGIWA (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that his country was proud of the untiring efforts of UNICEF to achieve the goals set at the World Summit for Children, and that it supported the strategies adopted to ensure respect for and protection of the lives of children. Those efforts and strategies were an essential element in the economic and social development of all countries, along with UNICEF strategies in developing countries to establish national programmes of action for protection of mothers and children and to provide for their education, health, housing and nutrition.

40. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, which attached great importance to the protection of mothers and children, had adopted national measures in that area. The previous year, it had established a National Committee to monitor compliance, assisted by the secretariats of several peoples' committees with responsibility for the application of special resolutions and programmes for the protection of children.

41. His country was currently suffering the negative effects of the air embargo imposed by Security Council resolution 748 (1992) despite its positive response to the requirements of Security Council resolution 731 (1992).

42. The embargo had given rise to many economic and social problems. The health sector had seriously deteriorated; for example, there were no antibiotics or vaccines to be found in the country, and diseases were spreading among school-aged children. There were no medicines at all which required rapid air shipment under refrigeration. UNICEF must acknowledge the importance of that humanitarian question, since depriving children - especially nursing infants - of vaccines, medicines and food was equivalent to endangering their lives.

(Mr. Sergiwa, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

43. UNICEF, which was committed to the objective of improving protection for children, could not accept a violation of their rights on the basis of a Security Council resolution; on the contrary, it should take a strong position in favour of a solution to those problems.

44. His delegation welcomed the efforts of UNICEF and WHO to promote breast-feeding, because of its great psychological and social benefits to children. The Koran commanded that mothers should nurse their children for two full years. His delegation also recognized UNICEF efforts to assist children in difficult circumstances. The situation of children in the occupied Arab territories in Palestine had gone beyond tragedy, and it could only be hoped that special programmes could give the children the help they needed. The desperate situation of women and children in Lebanon, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank should be resolved with the help of the Executive Board.

45. UNICEF must continue to devote resources to the needs of mothers and children in Africa, whose sufferings were more acute than in any other part of the world owing to the deteriorating economic situation caused by the continuing drought. The commemoration of the Day of the African Child demonstrated the importance attached by UNICEF to the difficult situation of mothers and children in Africa and helped to attract world attention. The conference on Africa to be held in Senegal in November was of special significance.

46. He wished to emphasize the importance his delegation attached to the role of family in the protection of children, as well as the development of their abilities and personality. UNICEF should place greater emphasis on the family, and should help in its formation and to improve its economic and social conditions.

47. Mr. GOLOB (Slovenia) said that UNICEF had made an essential impact on the Final Document of the Earth Summit just adopted in Rio de Janeiro. There were many facets to the contribution of UNICEF to the modern world. Its purpose was to give hope and to act with compassion in response to sufferings caused by natural disasters, disease, poverty, and disasters caused by man's own irresponsibility.

48. He had no desire to begin a political debate in UNICEF or on the Executive Board, especially regarding the issue of what would replace the former Yugoslavia. That issue should be settled at the peace conference to be held in Brussels, and in the Security Council and the General Assembly in due course. His only intention was to respond to the concerns of several delegations which, at the beginning of the current session, had expressed reservations on the matter. No one could take upon themselves the right to speak on behalf of all those who were experiencing unspeakable suffering in the territory of the former Yugoslavia.

(Mr. Golob, Slovenia)

49. Slovenia had followed with intense interest the development and completion of the World Summit for Children, held in New York on 30 September 1990, and would very soon sign the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children adopted on that occasion. Furthermore, Slovenia supported the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The parliamentary procedures for its accession to the Convention would be completed in June.

50. For quite some time, Slovenia had had an active national committee for UNICEF. In 1989, more than 2 million UNICEF greeting cards had been sold in Slovenia, or more than one per inhabitant. That figure could be reached again and even surpassed, and there were many other ways in which Slovenia could contribute to UNICEF's work.

51. Board members were well aware of the situation in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Croatia. Large numbers of refugees from both republics - mothers, children and pregnant women for the most part - had fled to the Republic of Slovenia. In some areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina hundreds of thousands of people were surrounded, without any means of survival. If no international measures were taken to achieve a peaceful solution to the crisis, those people could also become refugees.

52. Although his country was proud to offer safe haven to people who were being persecuted, it was experiencing difficulties in meeting their basic needs. The number of temporary refugees in Slovenia had reached more than 8 per cent of the country's total population. As of 1 June 1992, nearly half were children under 16 years of age and 40 per cent were women.

53. Of late, refugees had had to live in tents since no more could be accommodated in the available buildings. The Slovene Red Cross, Caritas Internationalis and other humanitarian organizations were continuously soliciting the people of Slovenia for financial and material assistance and had received a very generous response. The University of Ljubljana and other Slovene institutions and organizations had joined the effort with their knowledge and expertise.

54. Slovenia felt duty-bound to help the refugees by every means in its power, but alone it could not offer them well-being. However, international aid was unfortunately too modest and too slow, and would have been more effective if more consideration had been given to what was needed and what was easily available locally provided there was money to buy it.

55. Aid had been received from the International Committee of the Red Cross and Caritas Internationalis, and from Austria, Germany and Italy, among others. The International Islamic Relief Organization would soon be providing assistance.

(Mr. Golob, Slovenia)

56. Slovenia was well aware that children and mothers elsewhere in the world were suffering hunger, sickness and need. However, further help from UNICEF would relieve the suffering of the refugee children and mothers in Slovenia, and would also ease the burden on Slovenia itself, which was struggling to move ahead while doing its humanitarian duty.

57. UNICEF material assistance to date had been most welcome; the Executive Board might wish to consider making an appeal to Governments, and particularly those of Europe, for increased humanitarian aid to refugees in Slovenia. It might be advisable for UNICEF to establish a one-person temporary office in Ljubljana.

58. It was also of enormous importance for UNICEF to continue its participation in the multi-stage conference on refugees in Slovenia. His delegation had suggested a European conference on the issue of refugees, including children, and would very much appreciate UNICEF support for such a project.

59. The situation in the former Yugoslavia could be alleviated only by the restoration of peace and respect for established borders and the sovereignty of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Croatia. The international community should help to establish humanitarian corridors in Bosnia and Herzegovina, creating safety zones all over the Republic and securing the airport in Sarajevo for humanitarian purposes.

60. Mrs. TERRY (Cuba) said that her Government accorded a high priority to maternal and child health and to the child's full development in the context of Cuba's endeavour to bring about a qualitative transformation in standard's of living, which was reflected in the very positive results of the policies and programmes for children promoted over the past three decades.

61. Cuba was gratified, for instance, to be able to state that it had been possible to reduce the infant mortality rate to 10.7 per 1,000 live births and to eradicate various diseases, including poliomyelitis, diphtheria, measles and rubella. Also, owing to the AIDS prevention and control programme that had been developed, the AIDS pandemic did not pose a threat to maternal and child health in Cuba. The achievements of the Cuban revolution in the sphere of education, which combined academic training, links to productive work, artistic development and values of solidarity and cooperation, were also a source of national pride. The illiteracy rate had been reduced to 1.9 per cent of the population aged 10 to 49; 90 per cent of those aged 6 to 14 were enrolled in school, and a special programme available to handicapped children had helped more than 63,000 pupils.

62. World events that had affected Cuba's international trade were obliging it to strengthen its capacity to go on protecting those and other achievements. Cuba had committed itself to meeting the goals of the World Summit for Children, as demonstrated by its national action programme, which

(Mrs. Terry, Cuba)

was based on the fundamental premise that the welfare of mothers and children should continue to be promoted. At the current session, the Executive Board would be considering the cooperation programme that Cuba planned to implement with the support of UNICEF in the period 1992-1996 to meet the goals of the Programme of Action. She asked Board members for the greatest possible understanding of the measures that Cuba planned to adopt in that context.

63. Although her delegation might be able to approve the proposals on a new world order contained in the UNICEF report entitled The State of the World's Children 1992, she thought that in order to implement them fully a context of true international cooperation was needed and that to achieve the goals outlined in the report structural rather than ad hoc changes would be required. Coercive measures must cease to be employed against nations, since they only victimized the most vulnerable groups, particularly children, and any pledge or initiative to confront or overcome the problems of children could succeed only if the root causes of such problems were eliminated; and that could be done only by reducing the world's existing socio-economic disparities. Her delegation noted, however, that the report had not seen the problem of children as a phenomenon linked to underdevelopment or as the consequence of a world-wide process of social differentiation that generated wealth for a few and poverty for many more.

64. Cuba was prepared to endure its current economic difficulties and meet the challenge posed by new external conditions, not only because it was determined to resist and to triumph, but also because in the course of 32 years the revolution had achieved sufficient industrial, scientific and technological development to enable it to do so. Without doubt, the contribution of UNICEF would be of great assistance.

65. Mr. KLINK (Holy See) said that he was pleased to note the signing or ratification by 137 countries of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, the signing of the Convention by Governments should be supplemented by a mobilization of world opinion and of every family for the promotion of the rights of the child. Such a mobilization of public opinion in favour of children was one of the special tasks that were clearly within the mandate of UNICEF.

66. He endorsed the views of the delegations that had already spoken in favour of the special protection that needed to be continually afforded to children suffering from hostilities or their aftermath.
His Holiness Pope John Paul II had continually called for a cessation of all hostile acts, whose only outcome was more suffering for the most vulnerable. In keeping with that message, in April 1992, His Holiness had dispatched a humanitarian mission to Iraq to express his solidarity with those most affected by the consequences of the Gulf war. With regard to the hostilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, he had called on the pontifical council Cor Unum to intensify its coordinating work with aid organizations and launched an appeal for cooperation with the victims of the conflict.

(Mr. Klink, Holy See)

67. The Holy See had been very happy to note the recent establishment of the United Nations Central Emergency Revolving Fund, which it was certain would add to the effectiveness of international efforts to assist in times of crisis, and looked forward to close collaboration with the Under-Secretary-General appointed to head the Fund, Mr. Jan Eliasson, who had been received by the Holy Father and had met with the officials of Cor Unum.

68. The Holy See shared the view that UNICEF must coordinate and not duplicate efforts in managing the resources available for humanitarian needs, and must give priority to long-term development of sovereign national infrastructure rather than short-term effectiveness. It had also noted the concern on the part of many delegations that UNICEF was attempting to do too much, thereby "watering down" its mandate for effective efforts on behalf of mothers and children.

69. The Holy See viewed with concern the conflicting calls by some donor countries for UNICEF to involve itself further and further in activities aimed at the planning of family size or other similar interventions that exceeded its basic mandate. UNICEF must at all costs avoid linking aid for development with the dictates of the wealthier nations as to the "appropriate" size of families in developing countries and imposing its views as to the best means to achieve that end.

70. The delegation of the Holy See was not proposing that UNICEF should cease its balanced approach concerning information about such matters, nor was it in favour of procreation at any cost. On the contrary, it emphasized the right of spouses to decide on the size of their families without pressures from Governments or organizations and stressed that the decision must be taken with the greatest responsibility and must respect the moral order established by God.

71. In that regard, the Holy See had taken careful note of the statement contained in the Executive Director's report to the effect that UNICEF's involvement in responsible planning of family size was limited to promoting knowledge of the benefits of birth spacing. If UNICEF were to go beyond that clear mandate, it would run the risk of becoming the instrument of population policies dictated by the donor countries rather than serving as an independent instrument for long-term development change in sovereign developing States.

72. As for the summary of the goals for the 1990s which had been agreed at the World Summit for Children, contained in The State of the World's Children 1992, the Holy See drew attention to the inadvertent omission of the chapeau paragraph which referred to the goals' "appropriate adaptation to the specific situation of each country in terms of phasing, standards, priorities and availability of resources, with respect for cultural, religious and social traditions", and also of the phrase stating that "additional goals that are particularly relevant to a country's specific situation should be added in its national plan of action". That paragraph clearly expressed UNICEF's

(Mr. Klink, Holy See)

traditional respect for cultural and religious diversities, and the Holy See hoped that the omitted phrases would be included in all future publications referring to those goals.

73. Ms. ARYSTANBEKOVA (Kazakhstan) said that her delegation appreciated UNICEF's activities on behalf of children in the overall context of development. The first experience of direct cooperation between Kazakhstan and UNICEF - the dispatch of a joint UNICEF-WHO mission to the country at the beginning of the year - had strengthened relations between Kazakhstan and UNICEF. Her delegation took the opportunity to express its gratitude to the UNICEF authorities and to those who had taken part in the mission for their efforts to assess Kazakhstan's most urgent health needs, and expressed the hope that the mission's report would become one of the main pillars of world-wide action directed at supplying humanitarian aid to the children and mothers of that country.

74. Kazakhstan's need for international aid was related to the complex problems inherent in the transition from a centralized system to a market economy, including a fall in the standard of living of the population which created serious problems, especially in the area of protection of children and mothers. In addition, there was another lamentable phenomenon, namely, the danger to the environment arising from the virtual disappearance of the Aral Sea, which affected not only the local population but the entire world. As a result of 30 years of human intervention the level of the Aral Sea had fallen by 15 metres and its surface area had been reduced by 50 per cent, while its salinity had tripled. The economic situation created by that phenomenon was particularly hazardous to the population and children of the region, as demonstrated by the infant mortality figures, which were the highest in the country, and the rapid increase in morbidity over the last 15 years.

75. In addition, there were other important problems such as water supply, nutrition and medical assistance. In that connection, she recalled that UNICEF had been one of the co-sponsors of the International Conference on Primary Health Care held in Alma Ata 14 years earlier, and that it had always given its support in the field of primary health care. Like the other republics of the former Soviet Union, Kazakhstan was encountering serious health care problems. Consequently, she also expressed the hope that Kazakhstan would be able to count on UNICEF's assistance in child immunization.

76. Referring to the Tashkent Declaration on cooperation between the countries of central Asia and the mobilization of all who were interested in helping to meet the basic needs of those countries, she expressed the hope that during the current session a balanced decision would be taken on the assistance to be given to Kazakhstan and the other republics of the former Soviet Union. Furthermore, her delegation supported the mobilization of additional resources, and the use of non-traditional sources of funding and the coordination, in that context, of the efforts of UNICEF, UNDP, WHO and other international organizations.

(Ms. Arystanbekova, Kazakhstan)

77. The previous month the President of Kazakhstan had issued a document containing his views concerning a strategy for turning Kazakhstan into an independent, peaceful and democratic State and an open society, and which envisaged the adoption of specific measures to promote the interests of all the inhabitants of the country, especially the youngest. Kazakhstan had ample opportunities to bring about radical reforms by availing itself of the international experience which had been acquired in solving current socio-economic problems. UNICEF was one of the most important organizations operating in that sphere, and her delegation was anxious that that role be strengthened.

78. Mr. STEFANOV (Observer for Bulgaria) said that the social aspects of the reform initiated in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, characterized by a rapid transformation of the economies of those countries, were becoming increasingly urgent and called for considerable support from the international community at the present crucial stage. Despite the precautions that had been taken to ensure that the reform did not have an adverse impact, a number of social groups in Bulgaria were suffering from the reform. Unemployment was having a direct impact on household income and dietary standards; inflation and declining spending on social security, health and education had caused a sharp drop in pre-school enrolment; the housing shortage had resulted in growing numbers of homeless persons, including children, and the shortage and soaring prices of medicine had caused a decline in official spending on health care and social security subsidies. The infant mortality rate was rising, the birth rate was at an all-time low and there was a negative population growth of 0.4 per 1,000.

79. All those indicators testified to a drastic deterioration in living standards, a trend that might continue, or even intensify, over the next few years. There was therefore an urgent need for early detection of any sudden deterioration in current living conditions and better monitoring and measurement of the parameters of children's living standards in order to make it easier to alert the international community to potential social problems and to prevent any serious physical or social damage.

80. Bulgaria had signed the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child. At present, steps were being taken to harmonize national legislation with the provisions and norms underlying the Convention. For example, in the national budget for 1992 there was a slight increase, compared with 1991, in the funds allocated to education and health care, although the figures were still too low.

81. Following the World Summit for Children, many positive steps had been taken in Bulgaria to facilitate the implementation of the commitments made in that respect. With the professional guidance and assistance of the UNICEF secretariat, a nationwide analysis had been undertaken of the situation of children and families. An inter-agency task force had been established to

(Mr. Stefanov, Observer, Bulgaria)

collect data, analyse the problems, determine the objectives of the national programme of action and monitor the progress made. Such activities had to comply with the pressing political and economic priorities and the immediate problems caused by the economic difficulties.

82. UNICEF activities in Central and Eastern Europe should be expanded on the basis of a detailed programme that would enable the countries of the region to make the fullest use of the allocated funds. It was important and timely to establish a mechanism to monitor and provide assistance to children living in difficult circumstances.

83. His delegation also expressed the hope that the UNICEF Office in Geneva and the International Child Development Centre in Florence would play a major role in programme formulation in Central and Eastern Europe. Bulgaria supported the new UNICEF programmes on the protection of children and mothers and the increasingly important role played by UNICEF in the programme on education for development. Bulgarian government agencies and institutions were coordinating their activities for the implementation of the programme in the country.

84. Mr. REY (Colombia) said that, two years after making the commitments called for by the World Summit for Children and ratifying the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Colombia could take pride in having met the stated objectives and presented a national action programme for children in which a coherent medium-term action strategy had been formulated in the areas of health, nutrition, education and basic sanitation on the basis of the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s and on a conception of the child as an integral part of the family and society and as a person with rights and obligations, as was also provided in the new national constitution. In developing that programme, particular attention had been paid to the most vulnerable sectors of society.

85. The eradication of poverty and the welfare of the child were priorities that called for new forms of funding such as those proposed by the Executive Director in his report: debt relief for the sake of children and allocation to children's programmes of part of the resources freed up by disarmament.

86. The Government of Colombia had reaffirmed its commitment to children at the regional as well as the national level by taking part in various summits of heads of State, such as the Ibero-American meeting held in Guadalajara, Mexico, at which it had been decided to coordinate programmes regionally; and in the summit of the first ladies of the Americas, held in Colombia, at which ideas and experiences had been exchanged; and by supporting the activities undertaken by the countries of Central America, including the multigrade school for rural areas, known as the "new school", which had been initiated in Colombia and was beginning to be applied in other countries of the region with the support of UNICEF; the emergency programme to combat cholera, which had made it possible to alleviate the impact of the epidemic, and the programme for children of the Amazon region.

(Mr. Rey, Colombia)

87. Colombia would look very favourably on any decision by the Executive Board to continue the activities of the Special Adjustment Facility for Latin America and the Caribbean (SAFLAC) beyond 1993, since, although it had been an innovative strategy aimed at achieving one of the objectives of UNICEF, "adjustment with a human face", and had led to the initiation of projects in 17 countries of the region in priority sectors such as promotion of the interests of children, strengthening of institutional capacity and human resource training, the socio-economic conditions that had made its creation necessary would persist during the present decade.

88. He shared the concern expressed by the Executive Director in his annual report with the fact that no financial resources had been allotted for the implementation of action programmes, and urged that new sources of funding should continue to be sought for the implementation of the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children, which, since the Rio summit, had been complemented with Agenda 21, which set clear goals to improve the standard of living of the most numerous groups: women, children, youth, indigenous people and peasants.

89. Mr. STELZER (Austria) said that recently, UNICEF had been challenged by new emergencies such as the tragic situation of children and mothers in the drought-stricken regions of Africa or the plight of children in countries torn by civil war such as Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. Such events illustrated that the children of the world continued to be exposed to man-made and natural disasters and crises.

90. His delegation believed that the two policy papers entitled "Towards a New World Order for Children" (E/ICEF/1992/2/Part I) and "Medium-term Plan for the Period 1992-95" (E/ICEF/1992/3) rightly assessed the comparative advantage of UNICEF to be, first, its field-based and field-oriented organization and, secondly, its approach of successfully enhancing social mobilization to expand awareness of, and facilitate participation in the relevant programmes.

91. He commended UNICEF on having resisted some of the bureaucratic dynamics leading to concentration of activities at headquarters. In its future strategy, which should include Governments, local communities and NGOs, UNICEF should direct much of its expertise towards capacity-building and thus enable the recipients to increasingly make their own decisions and to act as equal partners in cooperative arrangements.

92. Recalling the UNICEF contributions that had benefited thousands of Austrian children during the country's reconstruction after the last world war, Austria acknowledged that UNICEF had to assume its mandate in alleviating children's suffering from the effects of devastating wars in neighbouring countries. The Austrian National Committee for UNICEF had succeeded, in recent years, through its commendable fund-raising efforts, in matching government contributions to UNICEF. At the same time, the Austrian Government had stepped up its efforts to increase its contributions to UNICEF; and, in

(Mr. Stelzer, Austria)

the context of its cooperation with UNICEF, had initiated negotiations on a junior professional officer agreement which, once concluded, should allow Austria to fund assignments of personnel to UNICEF operations in developing countries.

93. Early in 1992, Austria had signed the Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children approved at the World Summit for Children. The Convention on the Rights of the Child was currently in the process of being ratified by the Austrian Parliament and would reinforce provisions already existing in Austrian law.

94. Austria's bilateral development assistance sought above all to solve basic infrastructural problems. For instance, objectives like securing safe drinking water clearly illustrated that an improved environment had direct effects on the welfare of children.

95. His Government had been very impressed with the report of the joint UNICEF/WHO collaborative mission to the newly independent States and the Baltic States. The findings clearly indicated the urgency of assistance to those countries in their transition process. His delegation supported the recent consensus of the UNDP Governing Council and the recommendations of the UNICEF Executive Board that any new activities in Central and Eastern Europe should be undertaken with the fullest cooperation of the various parts of the United Nations system.

96. Austria had been a major donor to those countries, albeit mainly through bilateral channels. The activities of UNICEF and other multilateral donors were welcomed as a useful complement. They would, however, have to be funded through additional resources and must not result in a change of the traditional priorities of United Nations development organizations. Austria fully supported UNICEF priorities for the least developed countries, to which more than 40 per cent of all programme resources were allocated.

The meeting rose at 8.50 p.m.

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EXECUTIVE BOARD

1992 regular session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 10th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 18 June 1992, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Miss SETH (India)

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General debate (continued)

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent to Ms. M. A. Cuna, Office of the Secretary of the Executive Board, room H-12K, UNICEF House, 3 United Nations Plaza, New York.

Any corrections to the records of the meetings of this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

Statement by the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund

1. Mr. GRANT (Executive Director) said that the general debate had confirmed the widely held conviction that the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) had laid a foundation which had made it possible to achieve more for children during the past decade than in any other period in history. Still greater progress was possible in the 1990s and in the next century if the promises of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the World Summit for Children were fulfilled.

2. Virtually all delegations had described the goals and strategies adopted by the Executive Board and the World Summit for Children as a blueprint for action. He was pleased that the majority of countries had made significant progress in preparing national programmes of action and that many had completed them. Many countries had also taken other steps as a follow-up to the World Summit: Norway planned to urge aid recipients to accord higher priority to children, Canada had announced a $20 million "Partnership for Children Fund", Swedish development assistance would focus on the use of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children as planning tools, and Japan's national programme of action had stated explicitly that the country would increase its contribution to UNICEF. The representative of Brazil had cited many recent ground-breaking legislative initiatives which his country had taken, for which it was to be commended. China had completed its national programme of action and was also preparing local programmes of action.

3. Some donor delegations had referred to the Fund's role in assisting countries in the preparation of national programmes of action. While the representative of Norway had stated that UNICEF should be in the best position to assist, the representative of the Netherlands had insisted that UNICEF should strike a balance between advocacy and programme activity, a concept with which he fully concurred. The representative of Jamaica had welcomed the support proposed in the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1995 (E/ICEF/1992/3) to help countries implement national programmes of action.

4. The representative of Sri Lanka had made special reference to the second South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) conference for children, to be held in that country in September 1992 to review and strengthen the regional plan of action for achieving the goals for children in SAARC member countries and to consider ways of implementing national plans. It should be recalled that the first SAARC conference on children, held at New Delhi in 1986, had marked a turning-point for children in that region.

(Mr. Grant)

5. Many delegations had referred to the momentum for children's rights generated by the adoption and the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. A number of countries had also described actions at the national level to prepare for ratification and implement the Convention. Several countries had mentioned the important role of UNICEF in promoting and supporting the ratification of the Convention and its implementation through country programmes. While such praise was gratifying, support for the implementation of the Convention was a collective task, to be shared by all agencies of the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations and all groups in society having responsibility for children.

6. A number of statements had pointed to the need for special protection for children affected by armed conflict. A pattern of protecting such children had been emerging since 1989; all parties to a conflict should be called upon to respect that trend and to take special measures to rehabilitate children who had endured the trauma of war. Further efforts must be made in that area and more creative solutions must be found.

7. He had taken note of the proposal by the representative of Spain that a World Day of the Rights of the Child should be celebrated each year on 20 November, the anniversary of the General Assembly's adoption in 1989 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and of its adoption in 1959 of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. In considering that proposal, the Board should take into account the fact that many countries had already established national days for children.

8. He strongly endorsed the suggestion by the representative of Switzerland that reinforcing national capabilities should become a permanent operational principle of UNICEF, drawing attention in that connection to paragraph 99 of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1995 (E/ICEF/1992/3). The Swiss suggestion that all evaluations should measure progress in that area would be implemented.

9. With regard to the need for a comprehensive approach, also emphasized by the representative of Switzerland, it was in fact the Fund's policy to be comprehensive in its analysis of situations affecting children and women. The actions which UNICEF supported, however, must be selective, and based on areas of comparative advantage and the priorities set by the Executive Board.

10. He assured the representative of Denmark that whenever major new policy initiatives were undertaken, they were invariably discussed with representatives and staff in country offices. He cited by way of example the regional consultations which had taken place prior to the elaboration of the goals and strategies proposed for the 1990s and, more recently, consultations with field staff prior to the launching of the "baby-friendly" hospital initiative. The representative of Denmark had also expressed concern as to

(Mr. Grant)

the relationship between global goals and the country-programme process. The national programme of action was precisely the mechanism for adapting global goals to national realities.

11. With regard to the question of field office participation in an institutional dialogue on policy issues, raised by the representatives of Denmark and Norway, he drew attention to paragraphs 116 and 117 of document E/ICEF/1992/L.9, which indicated that UNICEF would continue to give priority to supporting and strengthening the role of the country offices. The document provided many examples of how lessons learned through country programmes were applied in policy discussions at the national and global levels. Indeed, several delegations had cited the joint evaluation of the Bamako Initiative as an example of the use of such lessons to improve the Fund's effectiveness. The proposal for a three- or four-year thematic rolling evaluation plan would strengthen the learning process based on country experience.

12. He continued to support operational and applied research, not only for the Children's Vaccine Initiative, but in all areas relating to UNICEF programming. He agreed with the representative of Australia that improvements in evaluation ought to strengthen the capacity of field offices to monitor and to evaluate their programmes. The need to place greater emphasis on fortifying the management of the evaluation function in UNICEF was reflected in his recommendations to the Board (E/ICEF/1992/L.9, paras. 123 and 124).

13. Numerous statements had made it clear that the international economic crisis had not abated, and that Africa was still the most severely affected continent. Goals for children and the return to sustainable economic growth could be achieved in many countries only if viable solutions to the debt problem, including debt cancellation, could be found. The resources allocated for debt repayment could be used to promote future growth through investment in programmes benefiting children.

14. As several delegations had noted, poverty alleviation was the single most important challenge to economic and social development. He therefore appreciated the continued support expressed for the Fund's work in the area of structural adjustment and for its efforts to include all sectors in the debate on ways of sustaining economic growth while alleviating poverty.

15. The needs of Africa's people in particular remained acute. Numerous delegations had welcomed the preparations for the Organization of African Unity (OAU) international Donors' Conference on Assistance to African Children, to be held at Dakar, Senegal, in November 1992. Some countries, however, had expressed concern as to the need for or the prospects for success of such a conference. In his view, the Conference would be the most important event of 1992 for the implementation of the goals of the World Summit. Before the end of the session, he hoped to discuss with the delegations in question the concerns they had, so that OAU and the African countries might enjoy the support they needed.

(Mr. Grant)

16. Assigning the highest priority to Africa did not mean neglecting other regions. While Africa's situation was the most fragile, Asia, particularly South Asia, continued to have the largest number of people living in poverty. UNICEF would continue to be responsive to the needs of all regions of the world, as appropriate.

17. Several countries had urged UNICEF to continue - and to intensify - its support for the least developed countries. In that connection, he drew attention to paragraph 268 of document E/ICEF/1992/3, which noted that the current system of allocating general resources ensured that priority would be given to children in the least developed countries. As part of its commitment to the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s UNICEF would continue to apply those allocation criteria during the 1992-1995 period.

18. Numerous countries had addressed the issue of emergencies. Several delegations had praised the UNICEF field staff, especially those working in emergency and conflict situations. He expressed appreciation to the delegations of France and Zimbabwe for their kind words regarding Dr. Marta Pumpalova, whose death in Somalia had been a tragic reminder of the perils faced by staff working in conflict zones.

19. With regard to the reorganization of emergency operations in the United Nations system and the need for UNICEF to play a full and supportive role in the development of the new Department of Humanitarian Affairs, he recalled that UNICEF had been very active in the discussions which had preceded the reorganization. The secretariat would report to the Board in 1993 on the implications for UNICEF of the creation of the new Department. Under the auspices of the new Emergency Relief Coordinator's office, UNICEF continued to work closely with other operational agencies in the field, especially the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the World Food Programme (WFP).

20. UNICEF had been organizing Emergency Management Training Workshops for its staff, Government counterparts and other agencies for more than five years. The most recent workshop for French-speaking African countries had been held the previous month at Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. UNICEF welcomed and would participate in the training initiative sponsored by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). As several delegations had noted, there was a need to ensure that the linkage between emergency activities and development work was maintained and strengthened. That issue was addressed in chapter II of document E/ICEF/1992/11.

21. The Ethiopian Government was to be commended for sponsoring the recent summit meeting on political, social and humanitarian issues facing the Horn of Africa, and he welcomed efforts to ensure that all parties agreed to the

(Mr. Grant)

principles first established on a large scale by Operation Lifeline Sudan, which allowed for the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian assistance to civilians.

22. He thanked the representative of Angola for his kind words concerning UNICEF emergency assistance to that country. It was to be hoped that the current programme of rehabilitation and development in Angola would be equally effective.

23. He had taken note of the request by Iraq for more information on the situation of children in that country. As Iraq was currently preparing a country programme, fuller documentation on that subject would be presented to the Board at its 1993 regular session.

24. He expressed appreciation to the observer for the Holy See for his positive and principled comments on emergencies and underscored the comments made by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees concerning sanctions. In his view, basic foodstuffs and essential drugs should be exempted, and humanitarian agencies should be given expanded resources to meet the needs of vulnerable groups, such as children and mothers, who were adversely affected by sanctions that sought to influence the actions of their countries' leaders.

25. He noted with satisfaction that numerous countries had highlighted the significance of child immunization in the development of health programmes and had encouraged further strengthening of the expanded programme on immunization. Many countries had begun to strengthen their disease surveillance capabilities and were advancing towards the eradication of poliomyelitis and neonatal tetanus. If the health goals for the 1990s were to be achieved, further progress would be needed in the prevention and treatment of acute respiratory infections, diarrhoeal disease control and immunization. In that connection, the critical role of oral rehydration therapy in reducing deaths from cholera in Peru represented a significant breakthrough.

26. In reply to the request from the representative of Czechoslovakia for clarification concerning the respective roles of the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF in the programme for acute respiratory infections, he said that WHO and UNICEF worked closely in policy and programme development. WHO provided technical advice, while UNICEF was more involved in programme implementation at the country level.

27. Several countries, notably India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, were making progress in their integrated approaches to child survival. The Children's Vaccine Initiative would be essential to the sustainability of immunization programmes, and he commended Morocco on its pioneering role in launching the Vaccine Independence Initiative.

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28. With regard to family planning, Austria and the United Kingdom had drawn attention to the unfortunate situation of women in the republics of the former Soviet Union who resorted to abortion as a principal means of family planning. UNICEF would focus on that issue in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

29. He had taken note of the Australian representative's recommendation that UNICEF should expand its activities to such areas as malaria control. UNICEF was providing pemethrin impregnated bed-nets, which were being used with favourable results in some African countries. UNICEF would also be an active participant in the WHO International Conference on Malaria, to be held in October 1992.

30. He had taken note of the requests by the representatives of Bangladesh, Germany and the United States of America for greater UNICEF involvement in family planning at the field level. He had also noted the concern expressed by the Holy See that UNICEF should remain sensitive to the views, values and priorities of the countries concerned. In its collaboration with UNFPA, UNICEF would continue to play a role in spreading knowledge and in advocacy, as well as in supporting programme activities which contributed to the success of family-planning efforts. Family planning was an integral part of the safe motherhood programme, and further training for staff in that area would begin in Africa in September.

31. Many delegations had urged UNICEF to intensify its response to the acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) crisis, drawing attention to the multisectoral social context in which prevention and care must be undertaken. The UNICEF programme approach focused on preventing transmission among young people at greatest risk through a range of education measures. In addition, the scope of primary health care activities would be widened to cover sexually transmitted diseases, in line with the need for broad-based community approaches to the AIDS pandemic. In response to the need for improved inter-agency collaboration in AIDS control, UNICEF had strengthened its relationship with the WHO Global Programme on AIDS and with bilateral agencies, both at headquarters and in the field. However, the ultimate responsibility for programme coordination remained with national programmes, necessitating a substantial injection of additional resources.

32. Substantial progress had been made towards the eradication of guinea worm disease before the end of the 1990s, through collaboration with national programmes and bilateral and international agencies. If successful, that effort would mark only the second time in history that a disease had been eradicated. Greater community involvement was also required to ensure the success of the campaigns against polio, measles and neonatal tetanus.

33. A number of delegations had highlighted the need to give greater attention to young people, particularly young women. One third of the world's population was between the ages of 10 and 24, four fifths of whom lived in

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developing countries. Young people represented a vast potential resource that warranted much greater investment.

34. Contemporary youth lived in conditions of rapid urbanization, profound media influence, severe pressures on family structures, increased exposure to harmful substances and decreased economic opportunities, with a concomitant rise in health problems, accidents and violence. Such negative influences should be minimized and children should be provided with the support and opportunities they needed to reach their true potential.

35. The Bamako Initiative had significantly strengthened health systems in many countries by making primary health-care services more readily available through cost-sharing and co-management. UNICEF would continue to implement the Initiative in keeping with the recommendations contained in document E/ICEF/1992/L.20. Strengthened national capabilities and popular participation were essential prerequisites for improved and sustainable health-care delivery systems, and he fully concurred with the view that the Bamako Initiative was the most viable way of attaining sustainable primary health care. Board members had been challenged to identify and study successful community initiatives, and UNICEF would continue to promote individual country evaluations, adapting the methodology applied in the Bamako Initiative evaluation.

36. Agreeing with the representative of Italy that the Bamako Initiative could be expanded to the level of full national programmes, he urged donor countries to make it a priority for supplementary funding. The rapid deterioration of health structures in Eastern Europe and the countries of the former Soviet Union, where UNICEF was being urged to play a more active role, led him to question the relevance of cost-sharing and co-management in that area of the world. He had taken note of the concerns expressed by the Republic of Korea on the issues of community involvement and the availability of foreign exchange for essential drug imports.

37. The "baby-friendly" hospital initiative had helped accelerate the implementation of the Innocenti Declaration on the Protection, Promotion and Support of Breast-feeding. He commended a number of countries on the steps they had taken to ensure that mothers could exercise their right to breast-feed their infants. Welcome progress had been made in 1991, with 52 leading hospitals in 12 developing countries making major changes in their maternity practices. UNICEF also hoped to create an environment in which its female staff could breast-feed their infants exclusively, and he intended to raise that issue with other United Nations agencies as well.

38. UNICEF and WHO had obtained a commitment from the 33-member Infant Food Manufacturers Association to cease the distribution of free and low-cost supplies of formula to hospitals in all developing countries, subject to the enactment of appropriate legislation by Governments. Together with the

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Director-General of WHO, he had written to every Head of State seeking such action. The progress report requested by Turkey on manufacturer compliance would be prepared after an evaluation of the situation.

39. Several delegations had stressed the importance of basic education in human development, national capacity-building, the sustainability of development efforts and, in particular, efforts to improve the status of women. The education of women and girls was seen as crucial in controlling fertility and family size, while UNICEF support for primary education and, in particular, its focus on the education of girls and women would help to sustain the momentum created by the World Conference on Education for All held at Jomtien, Thailand. The Chairman had suggested that UNICEF and UNESCO should help countries formulate action plans for the attainment of educational goals set in response to the declarations of the World Summit for Children and the Jomtien Conference. UNICEF had played a key role in the Jomtien Conference and in follow-up activities at country, regional and headquarters levels and a report on its response had been prepared for distribution.

40. The reduction of UNICEF expenditure on education, noted with concern by India, was due to the significant increase in resources diverted to meet emergencies and would, he hoped, be halted in the near future, subject to the availability of increased supplementary funding. In collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), donors and non-governmental organizations, UNICEF was assisting many countries in promoting girls' education, which it regarded as one of the major objectives of its basic education policy. The greatest challenge facing UNICEF in the sectoral field was the need to achieve a breakthrough in basic education, and he hoped to report on significant progress in that area at the 1993 session of the Board.

41. The National Committees had highlighted the importance of the education for development policy for their activities. The National Committees had been instrumental in mobilizing public opinion and, working with country offices, would be responsible for implementing the new policy, which had a vital role to play in enabling young people to shape the world's future.

42. Many delegations had stressed the importance of women's and girls' development, drawing attention to key women's issues and emphasizing the need to increase women's involvement in decision-making and to promote their education and access to income-earning opportunities. UNICEF programmes strongly advocated the participation of women in decision-making at all levels and efforts to increase men's involvement in child-rearing. He shared the concern expressed by the representative of Zimbabwe about violence against women and children and welcomed the progress achieved by Bangladesh, India, Morocco and Thailand at the policy level in promoting the development of girls. He encouraged other countries to make similar political commitments.

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43. In response to the call by Ethiopia and the United Kingdom for greater attention to women's health needs, he drew attention to the safe motherhood initiative and the AIDS prevention strategies promoted by UNICEF and WHO. He noted also the recommendation by Barbados, the Republic of Korea and Sweden that there should be greater investment in girls and women. Unfortunately, apartheid of gender was still very much alive in the world: in 1991 the death of 1 million female babies could be directly attributed to their sex. Further progress must therefore be made in suppressing socio-cultural attitudes and practices which heightened disparities between girls and boys.

44. Many delegations had noted the severe plight of women and children in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, but emphasis had also been placed on the need not to divert resources from developing countries, particularly those in Africa. The reports of the WHO/UNICEF collaborative missions had been welcomed as objective and informative, and they corroborated concerns expressed by Russia and the Baltic States concerning the need for critical medical supplies. The options recommended in document E/ICEF/1992/L.14 had been broadly supported, and, while different approaches had been suggested by various delegations, there was general agreement on the need for a strengthened UNICEF emergency response capacity. The repeated call from many delegations for collaboration and coordination among United Nations organizations, other donors and non-governmental organizations would be particularly closely heeded in UNICEF actions to benefit Eastern and Central Europe. UNICEF was actively participating in the Inter-agency Task Force on Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States and had participated as part of a unified United Nations delegation in a Conference held at Lisbon to discuss assistance to the Commonwealth. In addition, consultations had been initiated with the World Bank, the European Economic Community and a number of bilateral agencies, and field activities were being closely coordinated with all partners in the common system.

45. Many delegations had welcomed his initial proposals relating to the reform of the United Nations system, and a number of them had emphasized the need for future reforms to build on and not undermine the strengths of UNICEF. He was convinced that reforms could be achieved that would both improve coherence and enhance effectiveness, and he reiterated that many reform measures could be implemented by secretariats and inter-agency bodies.

46. Greater attention had been given to funding issues in 1992 than in recent years. There had been encouraging increases in general resources contributions, particularly from France and the United States of America and he welcomed the stated intention of Japan, Norway and Sweden to increase their contributions to UNICEF. Valuable funding initiatives had also been described by other countries, including Canada and the Netherlands, and he particularly

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welcomed the public support shown through the National Committees, which had contributed 25 per cent of the Fund's income. UNICEF faced difficult challenges in an uncertain funding climate, and should be conservative in its income projections while engaging in vigorous fund-raising. A number of countries had commented on the important debt relief for children initiatives, and he urged donors to heed the call for additional supplementary funds for Africa. He wished to assure the Board that, while UNICEF recognized the importance of the additional resources made available through supplementary funds, it attached priority to increasing its general resources.

47. Noting the satisfaction expressed by the National Committees and the United States of America with the medium-term plan sections on external relations, he assured the Board that UNICEF would continue to plan its activities in that area at all levels in consultation with Board members and the National Committees. As the representative of Denmark had noted, external relations activities would continue to rely on the use of advocacy and social mobilization at all levels of UNICEF.

48. The National Committees had made valuable contributions by mobilizing support for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, helping to develop national programmes of action in their countries, supporting the development of new Committees and implementing the "baby-friendly" hospital initiative. Specific efforts would be made to strengthen the capacities of National Committees in Central and Eastern Europe and to establish Committees in the Baltic States.

49. He noted the close cooperation between the UNICEF Geneva office and the NGO UNICEF Coordinating Committee on Activities for Children in Eastern and Central Europe as well as UNICEF cooperation with non-governmental organizations in developing countries, to which a number of delegations had referred. He urged all Governments to employ innovative methods to engage non-governmental organizations and other partners in their efforts to meet goals for the 1990s: only through concerted efforts by Governments, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations could the abhorrent apartheid of gender be abolished, and he pledged continued support to the NGO Committee on UNICEF in its efforts to promote girls' education.

50. Finland, Japan and Norway had suggested that UNICEF should exercise caution in its income projections. In fact, the Fund's income projections were modest, owing to the budgetary constraints placed on many donor Governments by the global recession. The medium-term plan had sought to balance the Fund's ambitious goals with its financial resources, and the issue would be discussed in further detail in the Committee on Administration and Finance.

51. Welcoming Brazil's endorsement of his recommendation regarding UNICEF headquarters accommodation, he assured the representative of Japan and other Board members that the matter would be discussed with flexibility in the

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Committee on Administration and Finance, and that the non-financial aspects of relocation would be thoroughly assessed, while respecting the need to find the option most consistent with sound financial management.

52. He joined many delegations in commending the budget reference group for the valuable guidance it had provided, which would lead to greater clarity and transparency in UNICEF budget-related documents. The group's recommendations would be implemented, subject to the approval of the Executive Board.

53. He fully concurred with those delegations that had stressed the need to maintain UNICEF as a field-based organization and assured the Board that UNICEF would continue to be the most decentralized agency of the United Nations system, with the vast majority of its staff in the field. The percentage of staff in the field had grown to 84 per cent in 1992 and was expected to grow still further during 1994-1995.

54. He welcomed the support expressed by Japan and the Republic of Korea for the proposed extension of the 6 per cent recovery charge to emergency programmes and reiterated the view of ACABQ that the current recovery policy should be expanded to meet the additional requirements. UNICEF was prepared to submit detailed information on those requirements to the Committee on Administration and Finance for its consideration. The emergency recovery rate charged by other United Nations agencies ranged from 3 to over 13 per cent, and while UNICEF offered a wider scope of support services than most other agencies, its proposal fell near the lower end of the range.

55. Recalling the view expressed by the representative of India that UNICEF was the keeper of the collective conscience of nations and their peoples and had been entrusted with responsibility for the poor, the weak and the vulnerable of the world, he assured the Board that the search for betterment was indeed the driving force behind the UNICEF secretariat's work.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

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1 July 1992

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UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND

EXECUTIVE BOARD

1992 regular session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 11th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 26 June 1992, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Ms. SETH (India)

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Statements of the Chairmen of the Programme Committee and the Committee on Administration and Finance

Adoption of resolutions and decisions

Preparation for future sessions and review of documentation

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent to Ms. M. A. Cuna, Office of the Secretary of the Executive Board, room H-12K, UNICEF House, 3 United Nations Plaza, New York.

Any corrections to the records of the meetings of this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

The meeting was called to order at 12.05 p.m.

STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMEN OF THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE (E/ICEF/1992/P/L.49 and Add.1; E/ICEF/1992/AB/L.19)

1. The CHAIRMAN invited the Chairman of the Programme Committee to present the Committee's recommendations for approval by the Board.

2. Mr. WARD (Chairman of the Programme Committee) said that the Committee was submitting to the Executive Board for approval the draft recommendations contained in documents E/ICEF/1992/P/L.49 and Add.1.

3. Mr. BERENDSEN (Netherlands), referring to the draft recommendation relating to Central and Eastern Europe, the Baltic States and the Commonwealth of Independent States (E/ICEF/1992/CRP.43), whose approval the Programme Committee was recommending in document E/ICEF/1992/P/L.49/Add.1, recalled that his delegation had stressed, at an earlier plenary meeting, the universal character of the United Nations system in general, and of UNICEF in particular, and the criteria to be applied to countries qualifying for UNICEF assistance. The recommendation in document E/ICEF/1992/CRP.43 made a distinction between qualifying and non-qualifying countries. His delegation took it that qualifying countries were those listed in paragraph 47 of document E/ICEF/1992/P/L.40 and that any revision of that list would have to be approved at a session of the Board; paragraph 5 of the recommendation, however, did not differentiate between the two categories. If the recommendation was not intended to apply to both categories, it would have to be made clear that activities in non-qualifying countries remained restricted in time, area and amount and limited, as far as technical assistance was concerned, to exceptional circumstances. Since non-qualifying countries, too, needed assistance in the area of policy formulation, his delegation approved the recommendation urging UNICEF to keep the limited time-frame in mind in setting out those activities.

4. Mr. MACHIN (United Kingdom) said that his delegation strongly supported the principle of universality throughout the United Nations system. While appreciating the urgent needs of the region in question, it nevertheless shared the concerns voiced by the previous speaker. On a wider issue, it attached great importance to the examination, by the governing bodies of United Nations agencies and funds and by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly at their 1992 sessions, of ways to promote an integrated approach, which was a key issue for the United Nations development system.

5. Ms. POLLACK (United States of America) said that her delegation emphasized the need for all United Nations activities in the region concerned to be carefully coordinated, and welcomed the reference, in the recommendation in question, to the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) and the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCP). It was important that overheads and administrative costs should be kept as low as possible and not arbitrarily

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covered from programme resources. Her delegation understood that the activities in question would be funded from some of the savings discussed earlier; it also encouraged UNICEF activities aimed at national capacity-building with a view to self-sustaining future action.

6. Mr. JOLLY (Deputy Executive Director, Programmes) said that the secretariat had no difficulty with the statements by the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. He was not sure, however, about the point raised by the United States delegation, since the issue of funding out of savings, although discussed in the Drafting Committee, had not been reflected in the recommendation, one reason being that, under the UNICEF budgetary process, it was difficult to relate savings achieved in one year to allocations in another year. The secretariat was ready to take up the matter informally with the United States delegation.

7. The CHAIRMAN said that, on the understanding that the statements by the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States would be reflected in the summary record, she would take it that the Executive Board approved the recommendations submitted by the Programme Committee.

8. It was so decided.

9. The CHAIRMAN invited the Chairman of the Committee on Administration and Finance to present the Committee's recommendations for approval by the Board.

10. Mr. KOIKE (Chairman of the Committee on Administration and Finance) said that the Committee was submitting to the Executive Board for approval the draft recommendations contained in document E/ICEF/1992/AB/L.19. With regard to the draft recommendation on Central and Eastern Europe, the Baltic States and the Commonwealth of Independent States (E/ICEF/1992/CRP.43), the Committee was recommending that the Board should approve the increases proposed in paragraph 5 of that recommendation, which would be included in the revised budget estimates for the biennium 1992-1993 and the proposed budget estimates for the biennium 1994-1995.

11. Mr. KAARIA (Finland), referring to paragraph 5 of the draft recommendation contained in document E/ICEF/1992/CRP.43, reiterated his delegation's concern that UNICEF activities in countries in transition should not be financed from the administrative and programme support budget. His delegation was disappointed that the agreement reached at one stage of the discussions about the use of accrued savings as a source of funding had not prevailed, because of difficulties pointed out by the secretariat. Bearing in mind, however, the need for adequate financing to ensure that the vital role of UNICEF in the countries concerned was maintained, his delegation was prepared to accept the text of paragraph 5 in a spirit of consensus. In that connection, it noted the statement just made by the Deputy Executive Director for Programmes.

12. Mr. BLACKMAN (Barbados) drew attention to a slight textual discrepancy between paragraph 20 of document E/ICEF/1992/AB/L.19 and paragraph 5 of the recommendation in document E/ICEF/1992/CRP.43. The former referred to two additional General Service core posts; in the latter, however, the word "core" did not appear.

13. The CHAIRMAN said that, on the understanding that the statements by Finland and Barbados would be reflected in the summary record, she would take it that the Executive Board approved the recommendations submitted by the Committee on Administration and Finance.

14. It was so decided.

ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS AND DECISIONS

15. The CHAIRMAN invited the Board to adopt the draft recommendation contained in document E/ICEF/1992/CRP.35, on an update of "An overview of UNICEF policies, organization and working methods".

16. The draft recommendation was adopted.

17. The CHAIRMAN invited the Board to adopt the draft recommendation contained in document E/ICEF/1992/CRP.33, on Universal Children's Day.

18. The draft recommendation was adopted.

19. The CHAIRMAN invited the Board to adopt the draft recommendation contained in document E/ICEF/1992/CRP.36, on the report of the Executive Director: proposals for United Nations reform.

20. Mr. CANTINI (Italy) noted that the title of the draft recommendation referred to "United Nations reform". His delegation had no wish to block a consensus, but felt that the title did not exactly reflect the content - reform of the United Nations as a whole went far beyond the scope of the recommendation. Accordingly, it proposed that the title should read "Proposals for reform in the operational activities of the United Nations system".

21. Ms. CORNAZ (Switzerland), Mr. MINAGAWA (Japan) and Mr. KAARIA (Finland) seconded the proposal.

22. The draft recommendation, as orally amended, was adopted.

23. The CHAIRMAN invited the Board to adopt the draft recommendation contained in document E/ICEF/1992/CRP.45, on governance in the Executive Board.

24. The draft recommendation was adopted.

PREPARATION FOR FUTURE SESSIONS AND REVIEW OF DOCUMENTATION

25. The CHAIRMAN invited the Board to adopt the draft recommendation contained in document E/ICEF/1992/CRP.27, on rotation of the Executive Board chairmanship.

26. The draft recommendation was adopted.

27. The CHAIRMAN recalled that in its decision 1992/5 on its future work and procedures, the Executive Board had requested the secretariat to provide it at its regular sessions with a table indicating the subjects included in the agenda for the previous, present and two subsequent years. At the same time it had been agreed that the Board would review the issues to be included in the agenda for the following session, with a view to eliminating those items which were no longer relevant or on which less frequent reporting was required. A consolidated list of documents requested for future sessions had been prepared and was before members for comments.

28. Mr. MACHIN (United Kingdom) said that the list of documents requested for 1993 was very daunting. His delegation would be considering it with great care and looked forward with keen interest to the recommendations on governance in the Executive Board.

29. Ms. VOGEL (United States of America) noted that page 1 of the consolidated list mentioned a report on progress made on the study to be proposed by the Executive Director to the Joint UNICEF/WHO Committee on Health Policy (JCHP) to examine national and multinational corporations' marketing practices for infant food. Her delegation felt that the report was not needed, since WHO had shared with the Board its progress in that area at a recent JCHP meeting and UNICEF had not been asked to undertake a study.

30. Mr. TREPCZYNSKI (Poland) agreed that the volume of documentation must be reduced. There was a possible duplication of effort, in that page 5 of the list mentioned two requests for papers relating to family planning activities.

31. Mr. WARD (Canada) noted that the consolidated list gave the Bureau a new mechanism for looking at all requested reports. If delegations could review that list and make suggestions by 31 August, some documents could possibly be compressed or combined.

32. Ms. CORNAZ (Switzerland) concurred with the representative of Canada and proposed that the analysis of documents with a view to their rationalization could be conducted on the basis of the procedure whereby, in the Executive Board, subjects for regular discussion were normally dealt with every two years, while more urgent matters came up for discussion annually. Certain "annual" subjects might not deserve such treatment and could be made biennial.

33. She noted that some of the documents listed, for instance "Measures taken by UNICEF with regard to strengthening of national capacities" on page 3, were not in fact separate documents but simply chapters of the Executive Director's report.

34. Mr. FIDHAMMER (Norway) said he understood that the Bureau was to make recommendations on the consolidation of documents to the Executive Board at its organizational session. He wondered whether that might not be rather late for the Board's 1993 deliberations and whether there was not some better way of proceeding.

35. Mr. WILLIAMS (Secretary of the Executive Board) said that the February 1993 organizational session would indeed be too late for suggestions on the consolidation of documents due for consideration at the regular session in April-May 1993. One alternative procedure might be for the Bureau to review the agenda for 1993 at its September 1992 meeting and to make recommendations to the Executive Board as to which items could be consolidated or given priority. The Bureau might make the changes on its own or consult Executive Board members by mail, or else a special session could be held as soon as possible after the September meeting.

36. Mr. KAARIA (Finland) noted that the nature of the listed documents varied quite considerably; the Bureau might wish to take that into account in consolidating them and see to it that policy documents were kept separate from factual reports.

37. Mr. GUO Xianzhi (China) said that far too many reports had been requested for future sessions, with no fewer than 54 requested for the 1993 session alone. He suggested that the secretariat should analyse the documents with a view to consolidating those of the same kind. He hoped that reports would, in future, be shorter and more readable.

38. Ms. MOLSON (Canada) recalled that a resolution had been adopted according to which reports emanating from the floor need not be produced by the Executive Board, yet several such reports appeared on page 5 of the consolidated list. Other reports on that page were described as emanating from the secretariat, yet if that was so, they must be in response to a resolution and should logically appear in the section on resolutions.

39. Mr. KLINK (Observer for the Holy See) welcomed the observations of the representative of Canada. It was unclear how documents "emanating from the floor" could have the same weight as those arising from resolutions, since the purpose of the Executive Board's deliberations was to determine which issues needed to be reported on.

40. Mr. HUSSEIN (Ethiopia) endorsed the remarks by the representative of China. Documents should be brief and their numbers should be limited.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

E

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E/ICEF/1992/SR.12
1 May 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND

EXECUTIVE BOARD

1992 regular session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 12th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 26 June 1992, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Miss SETH (India)

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Preparation for future sessions and review of documentation

Concluding remarks

Closure of the session

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Any corrections to the records of the meetings of this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

PREPARATION FOR FUTURE SESSIONS AND REVIEW OF DOCUMENTATION

1. Mr. EIDHAMMER (Norway) suggested that, since the Board would be unable, at the current session, to review, consolidate and rationalize the documentation to be prepared for its next session, the Bureau at its meeting in September 1992, should consider the agenda and documents that would go before the Board in 1993. A special meeting could then be held to endorse the Bureau's proposals.

2. Mr. MACHIN (United Kingdom) endorsed that suggestion; it would make it possible for the momentum for change to continue between Board sessions.

3. Mrs. SAEZ PUEYO (Observer for Mexico) and Mr. BERENDSEN (Netherlands) said that they, too, supported the suggestion.

4. Mrs. STEWART (United States of America) said that her delegation was encouraged by the discussion on the rationalization of the Board's work that had taken place at the March organizational session. It supported all of the measures recommended in decision 1992/5, since they would help reduce the Board's workload; however, it shared the view of other delegations that more could be done to improve the Board's working methods. The Board's approval of the reports required for the following session would help to ensure that only the most necessary documentation was requested. That, together with a conscious effort on the part of Board members to reduce requests for reports or to take into account the existing reporting cycle for many subjects, would greatly reduce the Board's workload.

5. Her delegation believed that the two-week time-frame for the annual Board session should be respected. The introduction of parallel sessions of the two committees would help improve the organization of the session. Careful planning should ensure that smaller delegations did not suffer excessive hardship. The Secretariat should consider the revised timetable used at the current session when preparing future timetables. Board members, through the Secretariat, should quickly schedule informal discussions of draft decisions once key points of difference were identified. When that had been done at the current session, consensus had been reached more quickly, and the work had proceeded more smoothly. Members should also ensure that draft decisions were concise, clear and provided new guidance to the Secretariat. She reiterated her delegation's suggestion that the agenda item number should be included on the documents themselves and on the status of documents chart.

6. The suggestions made by the Executive Director in the paper entitled "UNICEF Governance" merited serious study and should be reviewed together with the results of discussions on overall United Nations reform scheduled to take place at the sessions of the Economic and Social Council and of the General Assembly.

7. Ms. CORNAZ (Switzerland) said that she supported the proposals just made, adding that, in order to avoid an excessive concentration of items on the agenda, there should be a central theme at each session of the Board that would be considered from various angles. A possible theme for 1993 could be programme viability and the strengthening of national capacity.

8. Mr. WILLIAMS (Secretary of the Board) said that he was not in a position to indicate whether the Board would be able to hold a special meeting while the General Assembly was in session. As to the suggestion made by the representative of Switzerland, the decision would be up to the Board.

9. The suggestion that agenda items should be indicated on all documents had been made in the previous year and had been found very difficult to implement; the Secretariat would look into the matter again.

10. The CHAIRMAN said that he would ask the Secretariat to take note of the comments that had been made when it prepared the agenda for the Board's session in 1993 and to report to the Bureau at its meeting in September 1992.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

11. Mr. GRANT (Executive Director) said that the current session of the Board had sent a reassuring message to the children of the world; essentially, that the momentum to deliver on the promises of 1990 was being sustained. In UNICEF it was being sustained through the approval of the medium-term plan for 1992-1995 and 37 country programmes (including significant levels of supplementary funds which must now be raised) and through the approval of landmark resolutions on Africa; on Central and Eastern Europe, the Baltics and the Commonwealth of Independent States; on follow-up to the World Summit for Children; on children, environment and development; on strengthening national capacities; and on the proposals he had made for United Nations reform. He had been especially pleased that the Board had given explicit support to the Organization of African Unity's upcoming International Donors' Conference on Assistance to African Children.

12. It was worth remembering that during the past two weeks, almost half a million children had died in the developing countries of largely preventable causes. During that same period, UNICEF had continued its work in the field, helping to provide infants with 19 million vaccinations against the six killer diseases of childhood; complete over 4,000 water systems and 26,000 latrines; train roughly 50,000 people in developing countries to strengthen national capacity in various fields; establish in more than a score of additional hospitals the 10 breast-feeding practices enabling them to qualify as being baby-friendly; work with mayors in scores of cities to extend child-focused services and activities along the lines inspired by the important meetings of mayors in Rome and Dakar; and send 220 tonnes of emergency goods to countries around the world, including such hot spots as Mogadishu, Sarajevo and Nagorny Karabakh. National programmes of action continued to be developed; he

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had just received a copy of a decree by the President of the Russian Federation establishing a national programme of action with sweeping reforms to be completed by October 1992.

13. UNICEF staff members often worked under difficult and even dangerous circumstances, and they deserved wholehearted appreciation. They were the ones in whose hands the policies established by the Board came to life. At the same time, the Board should bear in mind the need to improve their working conditions so as to preserve and promote the optimal use of human resources over the long haul.

14. A number of colleagues had recently retired or were about to retire. They were: Victor Soler-Sala, who had spent 34 years with UNICEF, Harold Fleming, a Senior Programme Funding Officer, Dr. Samuel Ofosu-Amaah, one of Africa's most distinguished primary health care specialists, Juan Antonio Lopez-Penela, Dr. J. Peter Greaves, a distinguished nutritionist, Maria Diamanti, UNICEF representative in Kinshasa, and Mukalay Mwilambwe, UNICEF representative in Brazzaville. Teresa Albanez had left to take up the post of Minister of the Family and coordinator of the whole social sector in Venezuela and Mary Racelis would retire in December. They would be succeeded by Marta Mauras and Cole Dodge.

15. He paid tribute to staff members who had died during the previous year, including Bjorn Oldaeus, Dr. Martinka Pumpalova of Bulgaria, killed on mission in Somalia, and Françoise Levesque of Canada. He also noted the passing of First Lady Sally Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Professor Derek Jelliffe and Garth Pettitt, who, although not staff members, had been special friends of UNICEF.

16. The 1991 UNICEF Staff Awards for Outstanding Service had gone to the Bagdad office, under the leadership of Dr. Gianni Murzi, the Somalia office, under the leadership of David Bassiouni, and to Joseph Acar, Ole Boye, Maurice Dardas, and Rhonwen Searle.

17. UNICEF had been given a mandate to sustain its programmes and advocacy for the long term. Its coordination with other agencies had been recognized, along with its contribution to the system-wide emergency response capability. Tasks for the future included completion of national programmes of action, and in turn, their translation into local action. The private sector, non-governmental organizations, civic groups and religious and professional associations among many others, must be integrally involved in the process. Governments must ensure the minimal resources necessary to fulfil their national programmes for their own children, not necessarily through additional funding, but surely through better priorities in budget allocation. Aid administration in donor countries must focus on support to developing countries to meet the goals for the year 2000. Again, major additional funding was not necessarily required, but resources must be redirected to the highest priority human needs. Raising the level of bilateral assistance allocated to human priorities from the current level of 6.5 per cent of the

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total to 20 per cent over the next several years would cover approximately two thirds of the additional external assistance estimated to be required annually in order to achieve the World Summit goals for the 1990s.

18. Without a clear shift towards increasing allocations for priority human needs, the promises of the 1990s would be hollow indeed. If momentum could be sustained, not only would children benefit, but, through linkage with development, population and environment, a major contribution would be made to crisis prevention which the Secretary-General had made one of his top priorities.

19. The CHAIRMAN said that, during the session, the Executive Board had reaffirmed its commitment to the world's children and had discovered its commitment to women. Nearly one third of funds allocated was going to women beneficiaries, and the discussions on women's development had been extremely useful. The attention paid to family planning and population control was also welcome.

20. As a result of the lengthy discussion of health-related issues and education for development, consensus had been reached on sustainability of programmes and on the next steps in the children's vaccine initiative. The Board had also expressed its concern over the rising prices of the vaccines which would be required in order to sustain achievements in child immunization and to achieve the goals for the 1990s.

21. The Executive Board had expressed its solidarity with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the Baltic States and the Commonwealth of Independent States, while reaffirming its priority concern for developing countries. It had also reaffirmed its support for the Bamako Initiative and the responsibility of developed countries for Africa, where the growing needs of children and women were of great concern to all.

22. She thanked the Reference Group, which had worked hard to deliver the new budget format. Questions concerning global funds and office accommodation also had been resolved to the satisfaction of all.

23. During her term of office, she had gained insight into the working of UNICEF and into the state of the world's children. Her visit to Namibia had been particularly traumatic, since it had brought her face to face with the shocking after-effects of apartheid.

CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

24. There being no other business, the Chairman declared the 1992 session of the UNICEF Executive Board closed.

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.